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JOHNSON

INDIA AND OF RELIGION

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SAMUEL JOHNSON

पुस्तकालय
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गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

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INDIAN AND ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

SAMUEL JOHNSON

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1983

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE pages now offered as a contribution to the Natural History of Religion are the outgrowth of studies pursued with constant interest for more than twenty years. These studies have served substantially to confirm the views presented in a series of Lectures, delivered about that number of years since, on the Universality of Religious Ideas, as illustrated by the Ancient Faiths of the East. So imperfect were the sources of positive knowledge then accessible, that I chose to defer publication; and such increase of light has been constantly flowing in upon this great field of research ever since, that I have continued to defer my report thereon, in view of the existing state of scholarship, until the present moment, when such reasons are comparatively without force. Engaged for many years in the public presentation of themes and principles of the nature here illustrated, I cannot but note that a trustworthy statement of what the non-Christian world has to offer to the eye of thoroughly free inquiry, in matters of belief, is more and more earnestly demanded; that in the present stage of religious questions it is indispensable; and that the sense of inadequacy felt by all who have thoughtfully approached the subject, in a degree which none but themselves can compre-

The Standpoint.

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hend, should no longer prevent us from performing our several parts in this work. I need hardly add that the response to this demand is already admirable on the part of liberal thinkers in Europe and America. To them the present contribution is dedicated, in cordial appreciation of their spirit and their aim. It has been a labor not of duty only, but of love. I have been prompted by a desire of combining the testimony rendered by man's spiritual faculties in different epochs and races, concerning questions on which these faculties are of necessity his court of final appeal. I have written, not as an advocate of Christianity or of any other distinctive religion, but as attracted on the one hand by the identity of the religious sentiment under all its great historic forms, and on the other by the movement indicated in their diversities and contrasts towards a higher plane of unity, on which their exclusive claims shall disappear.

It is only from this standpoint of the Universal in Religion that they can be treated with an appreciation worthy of our freedom, science, and humanity. The corner-stones of worship, as of work, are no longer to be laid in what is special, local, exclusive, or anomalous; but in that which is essentially human, and therefore unmistakably divine. The revelation of God, in other words, can be given in nothing else than the natural constitution and culture of man. To be thoroughly convinced of this will of itself forbid our imposing religious partialism on the facts presented by the history of the soul.

Yet it should perhaps be stated that the following outline of what I mean by the idea of Universal Religion, although prefatory, represents no purely *a priori* assumption, but the results to which my studies have

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led me, as well as the spirit in which they have been pursued.

Man's instinctive sense of a divine origin, interpreted as historical derivation, explains his infantile dreams of a primitive "golden age." In this crude form he begins to recognize his inherent relation to the Infinite and Perfect. But while, as his happy mythology, these dreams have an enduring symbolic value, they no longer stand as data of positive history or permanent religious belief. And the same fate befalls the claims of special religions to have been opened by men in some sense perfect from their birth, and to possess revelations complete and final at their announcement. All these ideas of genesis are transient, because they contradict the natural processes of growth. We come to note, as they depart, a progressive education of man, through his own essential relations with the Infinite, commencing at the lowest stage, and at each step pointing onward to fresh ascension; an advance not less sure, upon the whole, for the fact that in special directions an earlier may often surpass a later attainment, proving competent, so far, to instruct it.[1] The historical process.

And this progress is as natural as it is divine. It proceeds by laws inherent and immanent in humanity; laws whose absoluteness affirms Infinite Mind as implicated in this finite advance *up to* mind, and then *by means of mind;* laws whose continuous onward movement is inspiration.

If this be true, the distinction hitherto made between

[1] I insist on the indispensableness of the infinite element to every step of evolution, because I find this nowise explicable as *creation of the higher by the lower.* The very idea of growth involves more than mere historical derivation. Genesis is a constant mystery of origination. And an ascending series is to be accounted for by what is greater not less, than its highest term.

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"sacred" and "profane" history, interpret it as we will, vanishes utterly and for ever. "Profane history" is a misnomer. The line popularly drawn between Heathenism and Christianity as stages respectively of blindness and insight, of guess-work and authority, of "nature" and "grace," is equally unjust in both directions, because unjust to man himself. In all religions there are imperfections; in all, the claim to infallible or exclusive revelation is alike untenable; yet, in all, experience must somehow have reached down to authority and up to certitude. In all, the intuitive faculty must have pressed *beyond* experience into the realm of impalpable, indemonstrable, indefinable realities. In all, millions of souls, beset by the same problems of life and death, must have seen man's positive relations with the order of the universe face to face. In all, the one spiritual nature, that makes possible the intercourse of ideas and times and tribes, must have found utterance in some eternally valid form of thought and conduct.

Ancient and modern types of civilization.

The difference between ancient and modern civilization is not to be explained by referring to Christianity, whether as a new religious ideal or life grafted into the process of history, or as the natural consummation of this process. The Christian ideal is but a single force among others, all equally in the line of movement. Civilization is now definitely traceable to a great variety of influences, among which that of Race is probably the most prominent; its present breadth and fulness being the result of a fusion of the more energetic and expansive races; while the freedom and science, which are its motive power, have found in the manifold ideals of the Christian Church on the whole quite as much hindrance as help.

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But, apart from the *causes* of difference between ancient and modern conceptions of life, the fact itself may be described as simply the natural difference between the child and the man. This transition is not marked in either case by sudden changes in the nature of growth, nor by the engrafting of new faculties, nor by special interferences of the kind called "supernatural," whatever that may mean, but is gradual and normal. Reflection supplants instinct, and, with the self-consciousness which brings higher powers and bolder claims, enters the criminality of which the child was less capable. In the child there was more than childishness; for his whole manhood was there in germ. The leaf needs no special miracle to become a flower; nor does the child, to become a man. *The whole process of growth* is the miracle, — product of a divine force that transcends while pervading it.

The history of Religion follows the same law. There is no point where Deity enters; for there is no point where Deity is absent. There is no need of divine interference, where the very law by which all proceeds is itself divine. It is as tenderly faithful to minutest needs at the beginning as at any later stage of growth. Whatever forms may arise, they require neither fresh legitimation nor explanation, since their germs lay in the earlier forms, their finest fruit encloses the primal seeds, and history, when read backward, is discerned to have been natural prophecy.

Continuity of the natural process.

Thus there are differences of higher and lower in the forms of revelation; but there is no such thing as a revealed religion in distinction from natural religion. So, too, spiritual and physical differ; but *natural* can be opposed to spiritual only in a very restricted and

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questionable sense. Any distinction thus indicated must lie within the limits of each and every religion taken by itself. It cannot mark off one positive religion from another, still less one from the rest; since, whatever meanings be given to these terms, every such religion will be found to have its own spiritual and natural sides, *if any one has them*.

False pretensions set up for Christianity.

Christianity is nevertheless constantly opposed, as a "spiritual" religion, to the earlier faiths, as merely *natural* ones; as if there were some essential contradiction to truth and good in our human nature, which was abolished by the advent of Jesus. The history of religion, so far from teaching such a schism between the human and the divine, —or this bridging over at a certain epoch of a gulf which, by its very definition, was impassable, — demonstrates the exact contrary, — a substantial unity of God and Man beneath all outward alienations. It points to perfection in the laws of human nature, under all the varying phases of human character; to constitutional health unshaken by the diseases incident to growth; to moral and spiritual recuperation, as human as the vices that required it; to divine immanence, under finite conditions, from the beginning onwards.

Where is the Universal Religion?

Universal Religion, then, cannot be any one, *exclusively*, of the great positive religions of the world. Yet it is really what is best in each and every one of them; purified from baser inter-mixture and developed in freedom and power. Being the purport of nature, it has been germinating in every vital energy of man; so that its elements exist, *at some stage of evolution*, in every great religion of mankind.

If any belief fails to abide this test, the worse for its

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claims on our religious nature. "If that were true which is commonly taken for granted," wrote Cudworth,[1] "that the generality of the Pagan nations acknowledged no sovereign *numen*, but scattered their devotions amongst a multitude of independent deities, this would much have stumbled *the naturality* of the divine idea;" an effect equivalent, in his large and clear mind, to disproval of the divineness itself.

Rights of the older Faiths.

As distinctive Christianity was in fact but a single step in a for ever unfolding process, so those earlier beliefs are disparaged when they are made to point to it as their final cause. They stand, as *it* has stood, in their own right; justified, as it has been, by meeting, each in its own day and on its own soil, the demands of human nature. They point forward, but not to a single and final revelation entering history from without their line, and reversing at once their whole process in its new dealing with their attained results. They point forward; but it is with the prophecy of an endless progress, which no distinctive name, symbol, authority, or even ideal, can foreclose. They are misrepresented, when they are held to be mere "forerunners" or "types" in the interest of a later faith, which has in fact entered into the fruit of their labors, and in due season transmits its own best to the fresh forces that are opening up a larger unity, and already demanding a new name and a broader communion. They are misrepresented, when, to contrast them with what is simply a successor, they are called "preparations for the truth of God." The exigencies of Christian dogma have required that they should even be described as mere "fallacies of human reason," tending inevitably to despair; a charge re-

[1] Preface to *Intellectual System of the Universe.*

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futed alike by the laws of science and the facts of history, since man never did, and never can, despair. Prejudices of this nature, inherent, it would seem, in the make-up of a distinctive religion, which forbid its disciples to render justice to other forms of faith, are rapidly yielding to the larger scope and freer method of inquiry peculiar to our times.

Misrepresentation of them.

Every historical religion embodies the sacred personality of man; announcing his infinite relations to life, duty, destiny. Yet it has been an almost invariable instinct of the Christian world to ignore this presence of the soul in her own phases of belief, and to hold "heathenism" to be her natural foe. However non-Christian morality and sentiment may have harmonized with what is best in the New Testament, it has seldom been accorded the name of revelation. Although there is always a comparatively intelligent orthodoxy, which assents to the idea of a divine immanence in all ages, yet the divinity thus recognized being, after all, "*the Christ*,"— and moreover the Christ of especial tradition, — and, further still, this Christ in a merely preliminary and provisional form, — there can be but little freedom in such appreciation of the faith or virtue extant in non-Christian ages. A mode of presenting these, not unlike that of the early apologists of the Church, is common even with writers of the so-called liberal sects; while, with the more exclusive ones, to praise the heathen being regarded as despoiling Christianity, it is an easy step to the inference that Christianity is exalted by referring heathenism to the category of delusions and snares. And it is not too much to say, upon the whole, that the most affirmative treatment of the older religions would hardly suffice to adjust the balance fairly, and to place them on their

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real merits before the conscience of a civilization which has, until very recently, expended almost all its hospitality on the claims of Christianity alone.[1]

Many of those who write in the interest of denominational efforts have trained themselves to shrink from no assumptions in the line of their purpose; while others are blinded by its logic to the most patent facts of history. It has been common to deny boldly that moral and religious truth had any positive *existence* for the human mind before the Christian epoch; to assume that the Sermon on the Mount actually introduced into human nature that very love and trust to whose pre-existing power in the hearts of its hearers it could itself have been but an appeal. As if ideal principles could have been imported into man by a special teacher, or be traced back to some moment of arrival, like commercial samples or inventions in machinery! So powerful is a traditional religious belief to efface the perception that every moral truth man can apprehend must be the outgrowth of his own nature, and has al-

[1] We may mention, as in striking contrast to this general record of Christendom, such works as Dupuis' *Origines de Tous les Cultes*, Constant's *De la Religion*, Creuzer's *Symbolik*, Duncker's *Geschichte des Alterthums*, Cousin's *Lectures and Fragments on the History of Philosophy*, Denis' *Théories et Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, Quinet's *Génie des Religions*, Michelet's *Bible de l'Humanité*, Menard's *Morale avant les Philosophes*, Mrs. Child's *Progress of Religious Ideas*, and R. W. Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*. To these, in the special field of Oriental Literature, we must add the Shemitic studies of Renan and Michel Nicolas; and those of Abel Rémusat, Rückert, Lassen, Roth, and Müller, on the remoter Eastern races. All of these are distinguished from the mass of writers on this theme by a spirit of universality, which proves how far the scholarship of this age has advanced beyond the theological narrowness of Bossuet, the critical superficiality of Voltaire, and the hard negation of the so-called rationalistic schools of Lobeck and Voss. But it is to be observed that these scholars are still reputed heretical, and stand in disfavor with distinctive Christianity in exact proportion to their historical impartiality. Of unequalled significance are Lessing's *Treatise on the Education of the Human Race*, and Herder's *Ideas of a Philosophy of Man;* works of marvellous breadth, freedom, and insight, to which, more than to any other historical and literary influences, we must assign the parentage of modern thought in this direction. Heine finely says of Herder, that, "instead of inquisitorially judging nations according to the degree of their faith, he regarded humanity as a harp in the hands of a great master, and each people a special string, helping to the harmony of the whole."

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ways been seeking to reach expression, with greater or less success.

Until very recently it was the most confident commonplace of New England preaching that all positive belief in immortality came into the world with Jesus. And it is still repeated, as a fact beyond all question, that no other religion besides Christianity ever taught men to bear each other's burdens, or preached a gospel to the poor.

Nor has there been wanting a somewhat discreditable form of special pleading, for the purpose of reducing the claims of heathenism to the smallest possible amount; a grudging literalism, a strict construction, or a base rendering, of ancient beliefs; which would prove every apparent spiritual perception a phantom of fancy or blind hope, or else a mirage reflected from the idealism of the present on the background of the past. Resolving the fair imaginations and delicate divinations of the childlike races into mockery betrays, however, far more scepticism in the critic than in the race he wrongs. The same disposition has often arisen from philosophical prejudice. Thus the desire of Locke to disprove the notion of innate ideas led him to a degree of unbelief in this direction, which has had noticeable effect on subsequent thought.

But we have yet to mention one of the worst effects of traditional religion on the treatment of history. It is still held consistent with Christian scholarship to deny moral earnestness and practical conviction to the noblest thinkers of antiquity, in what they have affirmed of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. They were "theorists, not believers;" "talked finely about virtues, but failed to apply them;" "gave

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no such meanings to their great words as we give to them;" were "aristocrats in thought, whispering one doctrine to their disciples, and preaching another to the people;" and so on. All of which is not only exaggerated or false in details, but in its principle and method utterly destructive of historical knowledge. Substantially, too, it amounts to rejecting all foundation for morality in the nature of man, and the constant laws of life. Critics of this temper have not now the doctrinal excuse of Calvin, who ascribed the apparent virtues of the heathen to hypocrisy; and Dugald Stewart was hardly more wanting than they must be in the true spirit of scholarship, when he met the first modern revelations of Oriental wisdom with the charge that the Sanskrit language was a mere recent invention of the Brahmans, and Sanskrit literature an imposture.

The large historical relations of the Roman Catholic Church have permitted its scholars to gather up the spiritual wisdom of the heathen, though in the interest of its own authority.[1] But even this appreciation, such as it was, the Reformation included in its sweeping malediction upon a "Church of mere human traditions." And Protestantism, with few exceptions, has continued to show, in its treatment of non-Christian piety and morality, the narrow sympathies incident to a self-centred and exclusive movement of reaction, and to an attitude inherently sectarian.

When other grounds of depreciation failed, there remained the presumption that all such outlying truth must have been carried over into Pagan records by Christian or Hebrew hands. In its origin, doubtless, this idea was the natural outgrowth of Christian enthusiasm, and the sign of a geniality and breadth in the

[1] See especially Lamennais, *Essai sur l'Indifférence en Matière de Religion.*

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religious consciousness which was reaching out everywhere to find its own. But there was also a dogmatic interest in the development of these claims; and this foreclosed the paths of fair inquiry. Just as the Alexandrian Jews referred Greek philosophy to Moses (some of them even resorted to pious frauds to prove it), so under the exigency of their creeds of depravity and natural incapacity, of atonement, incarnation, and mediation, Christians have been impelled to trace all ancient piety to their own records; to imagine late interpolations or communications with Jewish doctors or Christian apostles, in explanation of what are really but natural correspondences of the religious sentiment in different races. And when for such imputed influence there could not be found even the shadow of a historical proof, well-reputed writers in all times have not been wanting, who dared to affirm it without hesitation upon purely *a priori* grounds.[1]

A common method of dealing with the relative claims of positive religions is illustrated in a recent writer,[2] whose extensive reading is almost nullified for the purposes of comparative theology and ethics by the absolutism of his authoritative creed. He begins with affirming that "Christianity will tolerate no rival; that they who wish to raise a tabernacle for some other master must be warned that Christ, and Christ alone,

[1] Thus Hyde (A.D. 1700) supposes that the Persians must have been converted from idolatry by Abraham, and that their fire-altars have been imitations of that of Jerusalem; and a writer in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1859) attributes the Avesta to the prophet Daniel, and declares that the Persians must have borrowed their notion of a Messiah from the "revealed religion of the Hebrews." Another instance of the same kind is the attempt, not very scrupulously conducted, to derive the moral philosophy and spiritual faith of Seneca from St. Paul, so thoroughly defeated by Hilgenfeld (*Zeitschr. d. Wiss. Theol.* 1858).

[2] Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, i. pp. 39, 43. Examples of the extreme incapacity of this learned writer to render justice to pre-Christian beliefs may be found on pages 333 and 336 of the first volume.

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is to be worshipped;" and proceeds to state the limits of his recognition of character in the theory that "the most effectual way of defending Christianity is not to condemn all the virtues of distinguished heathens, but rather to make them testify in its favor," — *not at all, be it observed, in their own.* All of which reminds us of St. Augustine's saying, that whatever of truth the Gentiles taught should be "claimed by Christians from its heathen promulgators, as unlawful possessors of it, just as the Hebrews spoiled the Egyptians;" a process of historical justice still extensively practised by the Church.

It is not surprising that appreciative Orientalists should be moved to enter their protest with some warmth against audacities like those here mentioned. "The reaction from extravagant theories goes too far," exclaims Max Müller, "if every thought which touches on the problems of philosophy is to be marked indiscriminately as a modern forgery; if every conception which reminds us of Moses, Plato, or the Apostles, is to be put down as necessarily borrowed from Jewish, Greek, or Christian sources, and foisted thence into the ancient poetry of the Hindus." Friedrich von Schlegel at the outset of Oriental studies, as well as Müller at a later stage, found it necessary to reprove this disposition among Christian scholars. Yet he himself does not hesitate to use Oriental errors to point an appeal to Christianity as "affording the only clew to principles too lofty to have been elicited by human reason."[1]

Their independent validity.

It is time the older religions were studied in the light of their own intrinsic values. They are at once spontaneities of desire and faith, and ele-

[1] *Indian Literature*, B. III. ch. iv.

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ments in an indivisible unity of growth, which includes at each stage natural guarantees of all that has since been or shall yet be attained. We should go back to them now, in the maturity of science, with something of the tenderness we feel for our own earliest intuitions and emotions; with a reverent use, too, of those faculties of imagination and contemplation which are our real way of access to essential relations and eternal truths. For the race as for the individual, —

> "The child's the father of the man;
> And we could wish our days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

Ideal elements.

The first universal principle of religion is that all great beliefs have their ideal elements; just as in the natural world the bud is not a bud merely, but the guarantee of a flower. And it is these with which we are mainly concerned, as pointing to fulfilments beyond themselves, in a future that will not be mortgaged to any names, nor to any claims. They are that promise in the first belief, which the last cannot fulfil alone; the dream which only their mutual recognition can interpret. And it becomes us to find in our own experience the secret which explains how they have met the problems of ages and answered the prayers of generations.

Illustrations of these ideal elements, high-water marks of ancient faith, readily suggest themselves.

The religious toleration prevailing in China from very early times is not fairly estimated when it is shown to have lacked that deep moral earnestness and spiritual dignity which distinguish the highest forms of modern religious liberty in Europe or America.

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The question for our religious philosophy is, whether it is not of essentially the same nature; a germ out of which that highest freedom might come by pure force of the familiar laws of social and scientific growth, by the intercourse of races and the intimacies of diverse beliefs; whether it has not, even on its own ground, reached a point of development, in certain instances or certain respects, which makes these our greater outward opportunities look less than we thought them; and whether it may not hold elements of moral value whereof our culture needs the infusion. Similarly with the self-abnegation of the Buddhist. It is not that perfect devotion of the human powers to social good which would involve the best culture and the largest practical efficiency. Neither is this, we may add, the quality and extent of the same virtue, even as illustrated and taught in the Christian records. But to suppose that there would be need either of miraculous re-enforcement or essential change, to unfold Buddhistic self-denial into the best morality and piety known to our time, would be to ignore the fact that it has shown itself fully equal to these in the *spirit* of practical benevolence, and in ardent zeal for an ideal standard of purity and truth. In the same way, an implicit germ of Monotheism, even in the "element-worship" of the early Aryans, fully guarantees progress into the pure and definite Theism of the best Indo-European minds; and shows the assumption of a divine deposit of this central truth with the Shemitic Hebrews alone, for distribution to the rest of mankind, to be entirely groundless and gratuitous. Thus the cardinal virtues and beliefs belong not to one religion, but to all religions; and the diversities of form into which each of these ideals is broken by differences of race and culture do

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not affect its essential identity in them all. We everywhere find ourselves at home in the world's great faiths, through their common appeal to what is nearest and most familiar to us in solving the great central facts and relations with which the soul is for ever called to deal. Everywhere we greet essential meanings of the unity of God with man, of fate and freedom, of sacrifice, inspiration, progress, immortality, practical duties and humanities, just as we everywhere find the mysteries of birth and death, the bliss of loving and sharing, the self-respect of moral loyalty, the stress of ideal desire.

It will be found, in following the course of these studies, that all those forms of moral and spiritual perception which are wont to be regarded as peculiar gifts of Christianity are visible through the crude social conditions of the old Asiatic communities; in such brave struggle, too, for growth as demonstrates not only their vitality under those conditions, but also the fact that they fulfil functions inherent and constant in the nature of man. Such are the recognition of ultimate good through transient evil; of spiritual gain through suffering and hindrance; of freedom through acceptance of divinely natural conditions; of love, beyond a thought of constraining law; of the rightful authority of the soul over the senses; of the sacredness of conscience, and of somewhat immutable in its decrees; of the inevitableness of moral penalty, and the beauty of disinterested motive; of invincible remedial energies in the spiritual universe; of Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood, and Immortal Life.

Wherein lies our advantage.

Our advantage over older civilizations will thus be seen to consist not, as is generally imagined, in some new force, infused miraculously, or

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otherwise, by the Christian religion; but in something of a quite different nature. It is found, in fact, in the immense special development of the understanding; of the faculties of observation and the forces of analysis; in the advancement of science, and the fusion and friction of races; and, finally, in the wealth of practical material opened to all. So impressive is this growth of the understanding, and the sciences thereon dependent, that writers like Buckle go to the extent of inferring that morality and religion, on the other hand, as being the comparatively "unchanging factors" in history, have had "no influence on progress." But this is to reduce history to a sum in arithmetic. History is a living process. Its factors are dynamic, and are not to be pulled apart like dead bones or a heap of sticks. These ethical forces are "unchanging," only in the sense of being constant and unfailing; and the mental growth, which clears their vision and develops their practical capacities, in fact enables them to exert an ever-increasing influence, a completer fulfilment of their own ideal.

And so, in holding the vantage of modern civilization to lie specially in the sphere of the understanding, I do not overlook the force with which the manifold ideals of Christian belief have wrought, like other and older ones, at its vast looms of productive power. But I note also how perfectly these variations in the religious ideal of Christianity correspond with and depend on the steps of intellectual progress; how analogous they are to those of other religions; and finally, a point of no light import, how little what is broadest and best in our civilization has to do with what is *distinctive* in Christian faith, — namely, its exclusive concentration on Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. It is, moreover, pre-

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cisely in its moral and religious aspects that the Christendom of eighteen centuries can claim least practical superiority to the older civilizations.

Spiritual Reaction.

I have sought to bring into view a law of progress, in which the most important transitions in religious history find their true explanation. I refer to *Spiritual Reaction*. It is mainly from habitual disregard of this familiar law in its broader aspects that such transitions have been referred to special divine interference with the natural processes of history.

It is commonly supposed that *natural* growth in things moral and spiritual can proceed only in a direct line. When a divine life appears in a degenerating age, this theory requires the inference that, natural human forces having become effete and exhausted, a miraculous interference, like the "creation of new species" in the old theory of biology, had become necessary. What else should stop the downward tendency of "unaided nature"? Such is the usual method of accounting for Jesus of Nazareth and his religion; such the principle of historical construction which is assumed throughout the growth of Christian dogma:—the Christ and his gospel were a new spiritual species. So far as Jesus is concerned, this theory in fact rests on a very superficial survey of the condition of mankind at his birth; since his ethical and spiritual faith had their tap-roots within his native soil, and followed a line of strong democratic and spiritual tendencies in that age. Yet it is also true both of the Roman Empire as a whole, and of the old faiths that were perishing in its bosom, that social and religious life had, on the whole, become fearfully degenerate. Grant this to the fullest extent possible, yet "miraculous inter-

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ference" need not be assumed in explanation of the revival.

For there is a law of self-recovery by reaction, in mind as well as in matter; different indeed from that, as developing not an equivalent, but a new and greater force. It has been described as "forbidding that vicious ideas or institutions shall go so far as their principle logically demands."[1] It strikes back individuals and nations from degeneracy. It restrains excess in the passions with timely warnings. And it shows us each historic period hastening to an extreme in some special direction, only that the next may be forced into doing justice to a different and balancing class of energies, and so in good time all faculty be liberated into free play. This natural law of reaction is quite as essential and constant as the law of steady linear growth; though perhaps, when clearly apprehended, it will be found to be but a more interior and less obvious form thereof. It is not only essential to the explanation of primitive Christianity in its relation to the degeneracies of the epoch, but thoroughly competent to that end. It is adequate to prove the phenomenon a sign not that the spiritual forces of human nature had become exhausted, but that they were exhaustless, since even suppression only nerved them to unprecedented vigor.

Of course this natural solution of religious progress does not exclude personal or social inspiration, in any rational sense of the word. It leaves to religious genius, as to intellectual, its own unfathomed mystery, its immediate insight, its spontaneity, its enthusiasm, its fateful mastery of life and of men. It leaves unquestioned the fact that there is an element in the present instant which the past cannot explain.

Inspiration.

[1] Guizot, *History of Civilization*.

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Nay: it affirms the *constancy* of this transcendence and of this primacy in the instantaneous fact of spiritual perception. It recognizes the special energy of intuition in the saint and the seer.

But it implies that religious genius also has its conditions, and inspiration its laws; and it demands that in this respect they be placed in the same line with intellectual and poetic genius, even if in advance of them. They are not less purely human than these, either in their original source, or in the law of their appearance.

The energy of all these forces in the early Oriental world has seemed to me a very noble illustration of their universality. And I may add that we need not be surprised to find, amidst the weaknesses of spiritual childhood, certain superiorities also, incident to that stage, in the qualities of imagination, intuition, and faith, over maturer civilizations.

Religions judged by their fruits.

In point of moral earnestness and fidelity also, it admits of serious question whether what we call the highest form of civilization is an advance upon the phases of faith it has been accustomed to contemn. Admitting the clearer light in which science has revealed the laws of social progress, it would be difficult to prove that races in this respect far behind us are in any degree our inferiors in those qualities of the heart and the conscience which lead to the faithful service of what one worships, and the honest practice of what he believes. I venture the prediction that we shall yet learn of the Oriental nations many lessons in moral simplicity and integrity. Nothing could be more unfortunate for those who wish to exalt Christianity by comparison with Heathenism than to rest their argument on what they call "judging

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religions by their fruits." A distinguished orator has said, "My answer to Buddha is India, past and present." It would be as reasonable for a Buddhist to say, "My answer to Christ is Judaism, past and present;" for India *rejected* Buddha, as Judaism did Christ. What India is and has been, the Western world will probably be better able to state half a century hence than it is now. But if the power of a specific religion is shown in its ability to mould a civilization into the image of its own moral and spiritual ideal, what shall be said of one whose results after eighteen centuries of preaching and instituting our orator must characterize by saying that no one would know its Founder if he came among us to-day; that there is no Christian community at all; and that Christianity goes round and stamps every institution as a sin? We need not give too literal a construction to expressions whose substantial meaning is justified by the facts. What we would note is that these admissions concerning the practical fruits of Christianity are made by its noblest disciples; and that they virtually confess its inadequacy to meet the actual demands of social progress.

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Nevertheless, its religious ideal is still confidently presented as all productive, and final. Here is evidently some misunderstanding of the origin of these nobler demands.

It is in fact not the Christ-ideal at all, as is here imagined, but an advancing moral standard, due to many new causes, that now criticises the institutions in question. Such institutions were in fact unmolested by definite Christian precepts or prohibitions for many ages. Our reformer's inspiration is indeed as old as Christianity, — nay, more than that, as old as heroism and love; but its practical present resources lie in

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science and liberty, and even represent the triumph of secular interests over distinctively religious opposition. And every fresh task of the reformer is made conceivable only through the accomplishment of the last. How then can it have been evolved solely out of the faith and virtue of eighteen centuries ago? It is not the fruit of Christianity alone, but generated by living experience, in the breadth and freedom of modern civilization.

On this whole subject of judging religions by their fruits, we are yet to collect the data for a just decision; since it involves the study of civilizations whose inner movements have hitherto been in great measure sealed from the view of our Western world.

Meaning of natural equality.

Man=*Man* is the broad formula of historical science, as well as of practical brotherhood. But it must not be superficially interpreted. It does not mean the falsehood and egotism of communistic theories, which disintegrate personality and society alike in the name of an unconditioned "equality" which natural ethics nowhere allows. It means that in every age and race, under the varying surface-currents of organization and intellectual condition, you shall find a deep-sea calm, — the same essential instincts and insights, aspirations, tendencies, demands. The first vital problem of historical research is to find the constant factor, the guarantee of immutable and eternal laws, by means of the variables. Its first duty is never to pause at mere negation, nor indulge in arrogant disparagement, but to draw from every form of earnest faith or work its witness of immutable law and endless good. Not till this is done, can we wisely apply analysis, and interpret the diversities of human belief.

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The inspiration of modern physical studies is in the universality of their idea and aims. This fine idealism in the exploration of nature, by lens and prism and calculus, which casts theologies into the background of human interest, is preparing the way for a religion of religions, whose Bible shall be the full word of *Human* Nature. How opulent the time with encyclopedic survey and comparative science! Humboldt's "Cosmos" was representative of the drift of the century; a search for that all-inspher-ing harmony, of which the worlds and ages and races are chords. Humboldt, pursuing the idea of unity through immeasurable deeps of law, with a reverence that is too full of the spirit of worship to need the current phraseology of religion; Pritchard, tracing the physiological, and Müller the linguistic, affinities of the human tribes; Ritter, unfolding the function of every continent and sea, every mountain range and river basin, in the development of humanity as a whole; Kirchhoff and Bunsen, with their successors, applying spectrum analysis to the rays of every star, till the determination of the "sun's place in the universe" is but a single element in the immeasurable significance of light now opening before this marvellous instrument of research; Tyndall, making the subtlest phases of force a revelation of poetry and philosophy, and a delight for the general mind, — these, with others not less earnestly pursuing the unities of law, whether wisely or imperfectly interpreting its evolution and defining its higher facts and relations, represent the physical science of our time.

Universality in physical studies.

How should the spiritual nature fail to be explored by the same instinct? It is a deepening sense of the unity of human experience, and so of its reliability as

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well as dignity, that banishes supernaturalism, affirms universal laws in place of miracle, and bids us rest in them with entire trust; "loving," as the Stoic Aurelius said, "whatever happens to us from nature, because that only can happen by nature which is suitable, and it is enough to remember that law rules all." The growing belief that the stability of law is the guarantee of universal good, or, to translate it into the language of the spirit, that *Law means Love*, is the sign that Love, in its practical and universal sense, is itself becoming the all-solving calculus and all-analyzing prism of our spiritual astronomy, — the pursuer, diviner, interpreter of Law.

In relation to Humanity.

And therefore they who disapprove our inevitable exodus from distinctive religions, upon the ground that organizing good works would be better than reconstructing theology, have very slight comprehension of that which they distrust. It is the very spirit of *humanity* that is moving in this religious emancipation; clearing its own vision, reaching out to consistency and self-respect, and finding its sphere to be, as Herder has said, "not merely universal as human nature, but properly no less than human nature itself."[1]

"The object of all religions," sings the Persian Hafiz, "is alike. All men seek their beloved. And is not all the world love's dwelling? Why talk of a mosque or a church?" Hindu teachers have said: "The creed of the lover differs from other creeds. God is the creed of those who love Him; and to do good is best, with the followers of every faith." "He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only a good Mussulman whose life is pure." "Remember

[1] *Philosophy of Man*, B. VIII. ch. v.

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Him who has seen numberless Mahomets, Vishnus, Śivas, come and go, and who is not found by one who forgets or turns away from the poor." "The common standpoint of the three religions," say the Chinese, "is that they insist on the banishment of evil desire."

The Chinese Buddhist priest prays at morning that the music of the bell which wakens him to his matins "may sound through the whole world, and that every living soul may gain release, and find eternal peace in God."[1] The Buddhist Saviour[2] vows "to manifest himself to every creature in the universe, and never to arrive at Buddhahood till all are delivered from sin into the divine rest, receiving answer to their prayers." What else, or wherein better, is the claim of the Christian or the Jew?

It is so far from being true that the effort to lift religions to a common level is antagonistic to the humanities of the age, that these humanities could not possibly dispense with such an effort. It is their natural expression. It is the demand not so much of comparative science even, as of instant social duty. Is it not quite time that the excuses which religious caste has constantly furnished for treating the heathen as lawful prey of the Christian in all quarters of the globe were finally refuted, by bringing to view the unities of the religious sentiment, and the ethical brotherhood of mankind? Is it not time that claims of exclusive revelation ceased, which can only flatter this spirit of caste?

Fourier tried to circumnavigate the globe of human "passions," that he might show how it could be regulated for the utmost good of all: surely a magnificent

[1] *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures.* [2] Avalokitiswara.

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aim, however beyond any man's accomplishment, and whatever his mistakes of method. A similar idealism testifies to the same inspiration in all leading movements of modern thought. It is the humanitarian instinct that guarantees them: it is this instinct that forbids their falling away from the very principles that make them colossal in stature and infinite in reach. Hence the new sciences of mind, theories of progress, analyses of social function, brave and broad claims of equal opportunity for the races and the sexes. Let us be assured that Liberty, Democracy, Labor Reform, Popular Progress, are to reach beyond the assertion of exclusive rights or selfish claims into full recognition of universal duties; that liberty is not to stop in license, nor democracy in greed and aggression, nor progress to be earned through bloody retributions alone.

And this humanitarian instinct, which impels each private current towards the universal life, is not only recreating literature and art, but changing the heart of scholarship also. It demands an ideal culture, that shall give breadth and freedom to our philosophy of life. It culls the choicest thought of all time. It would nurse every child at the breast of that oldest wisdom of love which Jesus confessedly but repeated as the substance of the Hebrew Law and Prophets, and which in them was but the echo of all noble human experience from the beginning of time. It transmutes that one mother's blood which flows through the veins of all ages to practical nerve and manly sinew of present service. It will discern the fine gold in all creeds and rites, which gave them enduring currency. It will read in sphynx and pyramid, in prehistoric bone heap and sculptured wall, in Druid

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Circles and Greek Mysteries, and Shemitic Prophecies and the antique Bibles and Codes, the varied hieroglyph of man's assurance of Deity, duty, and immortality. It will trace through all transformations of faith the eternal right of man's ideal to reinterpret life and nature, and to change old gods for new.

Even so decided an opponent of naturalistic religion as Guizot bears witness to the constructive spirit of this aspiration to a larger synthesis of faith. "What gives the modern movement against Christianity its most formidable character," he says, "is a sentiment which has found heroes and martyrs, the love of truth at all risks, and despite of consequences, for the sake of truth and for its sake alone." If such a spirit as this is "formidable" to Christianity, could there be stronger proof that the time for that free culture which it demands is fully come?

Duty of the Scholar.

The scholar must identify himself with the social reformer, and demonstrate brotherhood out of the old Bibles and the stammering speech of primitive men. It is his duty to show that the human arteries beat everywhere with the same royal blood. It is his duty to help break down the strongholds of theological and social contempt, and refute the pretences by which strong races have ever justified their oppression of the weak. He may avail himself of Comparative Philology, or Comparative Physiology, or of any other branch of ethnological science. The materials are at last abundant, the laborers in these harvests equal to his utmost need. But if all these resources should prove inadequate; if the language, physical organization, and social condition of any race, should all appear to invite the contempt of

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Christian nations, there is still left the testimony of the religious sentiment. The essential unity of man does not rest on physiological, but on psychological grounds.

A true philosophy of History will know how to reconcile this identity in the substance with phases of progressive development. But no theory will serve, which fails to recognize it as real in every one of these phases. Formulas are as dangerous as they are fascinating. Thus Hegel, compelled by his formal logic, regards the Oriental religions as merely representing man in the undeveloped state of non-distinction from nature; in other words, in pure bondage to the senses. And so, as elsewhere, his philosophical generalization plays into the hands of theological prejudice. It tells but half the truth. It ignores the fact that man himself was the soul of these earlier faiths. There were incessantly noble reactions which protested against such bondage as he describes, and justified human nature, as genius and intuition and free self-consciousness, even in the crude experience of its earlier children; although men had not yet learned to analyze the mysteries of subject and object, Being and Thought. Let us be admonished by the hint of the old Buddhist poet:—

"The depths of antiquity are full of light. Scarcely have a few rays been transmitted to us. We are like infants born at midnight. When we see the sun rise, we think that yesterday never was."

Religious revolution approaching.

The opening of China to the Western nations, and of the West to Chinese emigration and labor, are events as momentous in their religious as in their commercial and political bearings.

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Taken in connection with revolutions in Japan indicating the growth of a liberal policy, and with the rapid disclosure of the field of Hindu literature and life during the past half century, they announce a new phase in the education of Christendom. It is as certain that the complacent faith of the Christian Church in itself as the sole depositary of religious truth is to be startled and confounded by the new experience, as that the fixed ideas of that huge population which swarms along the great river-arteries of China, and heaps flowers in the temples of spirit-ancestors, and bows at shrines of Confucius and Fo, are to be astounded at the immense resources of the "outside barbarians," and their peculiar worship of Mammon and Christ. The time has arrived, in the providence of modern social and industrial progress, for a mutual interchange of experience between the East and the West, for which neither was prepared, but which is quite indispensable to the advancement of both forms of civilization.

Not an ecclesiastical opportunity

In their natural impatience to count these unknown millions as converts to Christian theology, the Churches but feebly comprehend the seriousness of the situation. Dreams of denominational trophies won in these realms of Pagan night, where the tidings of salvation by the power or the blood of Christ are to come as a long-desired dawn of day, will probably prove illusory. Missionary zeal has been but a poor spell to conjure with. All its auguries and exorcisms have failed. The real opportunity and promise is of another kind. The world of religion is wider than Christendom has apprehended, and it is undoubtedly destined to widen in the sight of man as much as the world of population and trade.

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Christianity, as well as Heathendom, is on the eve of judgment. It is to discover that it has much to learn as well as to teach. I firmly believe that in making the worship of Jesus as "the Christ" — which, more than any essential difference in moral precept or religious intuition, forms its actual distinction from other religions — a prescriptive basis of faith, it will strike against a mass of outside human experience so overwhelming as to put beyond doubt the futility of pressing either this or any other *exclusive* claim as authoritative for mankind. I have written in no spirit of negation towards aught that deserves respect in its faith or its purpose; in no disparagement of what is eternally noble and dear to man in the life of Jesus; but with the sincere desire to help in bridging the gulf of an inevitable transition in religious belief, and in pointing out the better foundations already arising amidst these tides that will not spare the ancient footholds and contented finalities of faith. And in this spirit it is, that, after such serious study of the Religions of the East, their bibles and traditions, as has been possible, without direct acquaintance with the Oriental languages, — through the labors of scholars like Lassen, Schlegel, Weber, Rosen, Kuhn, Wilson, Burnouf, Bunsen, Spiegel, Rückert, Müller, Legge, Bastian, our own Whitney, and of many others, rendering such direct acquaintance comparatively needless, — I have reached the conviction that these *oldest* religions have an exceedingly important function to fulfil in that present transformation of the *latest* into a purer Theism, which is still irreverently denounced as infidelity. The mission of Christianity to the heathen is not only for the overthrow of many of their religious peculiarities, but quite as truly for the essential mod-

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ification of its own. The change from distinctive Christianity to Universal Religion is a revolution, compared with which the passage from Judaism to Christianity itself was trivial.

Here is the practical situation. Christendom is henceforth to face those older civilizations out of which its own life has in large measure proceeded, and on which its reactions have hitherto made scarcely any impression. Brought into intimate relations with races whose beliefs are more obstinate than its own, and even more firmly rooted in "supernatural" claims, it will be obliged to drop all exclusiveness and absolutism, defer to the common light of natural religion, and do justice to instincts and convictions that have sustained other civilizations through longer periods than its own. The movement is not retrograde, but in the direct line of our own American growth; a promise of science and a consequence of liberty. It can be regarded as a return to bygone systems only by those whose own feet cling too closely to special traditions to venture on testing what lies beyond them. As well think it makes no difference whether one goes to China with Agassiz in a Pacific steamer, or as a Middle Age monk across the sands of Gobi. The new wisdom makes and finds all the old life new. A richer and deeper synthesis beckons us, of which telegraph and treaty are but symbols. There are *divine* recognitions in that grasp of brotherly hands which will soon complete the circuit of the physical globe. The Situation.

Scholars have not been wanting who bring us hints of this large communion from the Scriptures of the East. Here and there a thoughtful traveller or a liberal missionary has noted the brighter facts, that

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tell for human nature, and explain the social permanence and enduring faith of these strange civilizations. Even from the Catholic Church, as we have already said, have come many willing tributes, however perverted to the support of its own claims, to the idea that revelation has in no wise been confined to one person, race, or religion. But the strongest evidence has failed of its due effect thus far, because the practical interests of society had not compelled attention to these distant fields. At last their immensity, as well as actuality, becomes a fact of common experience; and the ethics of Confucius and the piety of the Vedas are to stand as real and positive before the mind of Christendom as the mercantile and political interests that give dignity to this opening of the great gates of the Morning Land.

The Promise.

"*Ex Oriente Lux!*" Light from the East once more! As it came to Greece in the "Sacred Mysteries" with the Dorians and the Pythagoreans and the Chaldaic Oracles; to Alexandria in Philo and Plotinus; to Europe in Judaism and Christianity; to the Middle Ages by the Crusades, in floods of legend and fable, the imaginative lore that was itself an education of the ideal faculty, and prepared the way for modern liberty and æsthetic culture, — so now again it comes to modern civilization through literature and commerce and religious sympathy; and, as ever before, with a mission to help clear the sight and enlarge the field of belief. Christendom will not become Buddhist, nor bow to Confucius, nor worship Brahma; but it will render justice to the one spiritual nature which spoke in ways as yet unrecognized, in these differing faiths. It will learn that Religion itself is more than any positive

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form under which it has appeared, and rests on broader and deeper authority than can ever be confined in a prescribed ideal. The religious sentiment demands freedom from its own exclusive venerations, that it may recognize principles in their own validity, and instead of revolving in endless beat around some pivotal personality, some fixed historic name or symbol, front directly the spiritual laws and facts which man has ever sought to recognize and express, and find them ample guaranties of growth, and ministers of good.

Limits and Purpose of the Inquiry.

These bearings of the present work on questions now uppermost in the religious consciousness are summed up in the outset, not in order to forestall the reader's judgment on the field of inquiry before him, but in justice to that independent attitude towards distinctive religions, which is demanded alike by science, philosophy, and humanity, enforced by the results of historical study, and recognized by religion itself as a new birth of intellectual freedom and spiritual power. While our criticism must point out deficiency of this universal element, and hostility to it, wherever they appear, yet the substantial spirit and motive of these studies is not polemical nor even theological. As far as they go in regions of research whose immensity the largest scholarship does but open (and of these I would be understood as but aspiring to sketch the general outline), they would record the ethical and spiritual import of those older civilizations, whose seats were in India, China, and Persia previous to the Christian epoch; with such light from their later forms and results as may be required for their appreciation. I would emphasize in them whatever may encourage

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respect for human nature, while hiding none of their darker features; which indeed do but illustrate the common inadequacy of all past forms of faith in view of our new and still advancing ideals, and so must the more commend religion to the forward step and aim. Ill-understood beliefs and institutions, whereof we ourselves are not without representative forms, I would trace to their roots in the spontaneities of spiritual being, and make as clear as I may the essential identity of human aspirations, under conditions of experience and in stages of progress the most diverse.

Finally, within these limits of inquiry, I would note directions in which the differing civilizations may help to supply each other's defects; and, in sum, endeavor to bring the old antipodal races now practically at our doors under that light of free and fair inquiry which justice to them and to the common good requires.

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INDIA.

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RELIGION AND LIFE.

I.

THE PRIMITIVE ARYAS.

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THE PRIMITIVE ARYAS.

THAT elevated region in Central Asia extending from the Hindu Kuh to the Armenian mountains, which is now known as the plateau of Iran, is entitled to be called in an important sense the homestead of the human family. It was at least the ancestral abode of those races which have hitherto led the movement of civilization. Its position and structure are wonderfully appropriate to such a function; for this main focus of ethnic radiation is also the geographical centre of the Eastern hemisphere. "There, at the intersection of the continental axes, stands the real apex of the earth."[1] And its borders rise on every side into commanding mountain knots and ranges, that look eastward over the steppes of Thibet and the plains of India, westward down the Assyrian lowlands towards the Mediterranean, northward over the wide sands of Central Asia, and southward across Arabia and the Tropic Seas. "Where else," demands Herder, with natural enthusiasm, if not with scientific knowledge, "should man, the summit of creation, come into being?" Whatever answer be given to this still open question, the symbolism of the majestic plateau points, we may suggest,

The Aryan Homestead.

[1] Reclus, *The Earth.*

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to higher human meaning than that of the mere historical beginning of the race.

The languages and mythologies of nearly all the great historic races, in their widest dispersion, point back to these mountain outlooks of Iran. Hindu, Persian, Hebrew, Mongol, kneel towards these venerable heights, as their common fatherland; a primeval Eden, peopled by their earliest legends with gods and genii, and long-lived, happy men. The homes of ancient civilization rose around their bases, as under the shadow of a patriarchal tent; and there they were gathered to the dust. The drift of forty centuries of human history lies amidst their recesses, and strewn over the spaces which they enclose; attesting what storms and tides of life have preceded our own; vestiges of aspiration and achievement hid in prehistoric times; relics of old religions; inscriptions in mysterious tongues; local names, whose vague etymological affinities suggest startling relations between widely separated ages and races. The highways of the oldest commerce strike across this plateau, and out from it on either side; and caravan tracks of immemorial age hint the lines of those primitive migrations that issued from its colossal gates. We seem to be contemplating a marvellous symbol of the unity of the human race and of its movement in history; born out of the mystic intimacy of Nature with its inmost meaning.

Of the primeval life of races on this grander Ararat we know but little. Why indeed should we call it primeval? It is but a step or two that history or science can penetrate towards any form of human life that would really deserve that name. Should we gain much by knowing the crudest human conditions, after

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all? It is said that there are tribes in Thibet that glory in believing themselves descended from apes.[1] Darwinians would probably be content to glory in merely getting sight of the process, if that could be found. But even if we should come upon traces of it, whether in Thibet or elsewhere, would it show the origin of man, *as mind;* that is, *as Man?* This is a mystery involved in every step of mental evolution; in the fact of thinking, *now;* and we cannot account for this evolution by any *previous* steps. We shall hardly find the source of our personality by tracking it backward and downward into nought.

I do not even enter here into the question, whether the eastern or the western edge of the great plateau was first peopled; or whether Armenia or Bactria was the earliest centre of ethnic radiation. The oldest Bibles "belong to the modern history of the race." What are patriarchal legends, what is Balkh, "mother of cities," what is Ararat or Belur-Tagh, what are Aryas or Shemites, what is Adam or Manu, — to him who explores the pathless, voiceless ages of prehistoric man? There is no respect of persons or places in that silence of unnumbered centuries that shrouds the infancy of the soul.

It suffices to say that in the dawn of history we find the Hindus descending from these heights of Central Asia to the South,[2] the Iranians to the West, and the Chinese to the East.

Let us turn to that focus of movement, of which we know the most, — to the Bactrian Highlands, at the north-eastern extremity of Iran, nestling under the multitudinous heights of the Belur-Tagh and Hindu

[1] Klaproth, *Asia Polyglotta.*

[2] See proofs and authorities in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, ii. 306–322.

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Kuh. They who have penetrated farthest into these mountain ranges report that the silent abysses of the midnight sky with its intensely burning stars, and the colossal peaks lifting their white masses beyond storms, impress the imagination with such a sense of fathomless mystery and eternal repose as no other region on earth can suggest. The mean altitude of these summits of Himâlaya, the Home of Snow, is loftier than that of any other mountain system in the world; and their mighty faces, unapproachable by man, overlook vast belts of forest which he has not ventured to explore. From one point Hooker saw twenty snow peaks, each over twenty thousand feet in height, whose white ridge of frosted silver stretched over the whole horizon for one hundred and sixty degrees. Here are splendors and glooms, unutterable powers, impenetrable reserves, correspondent to that spiritual nature in whose earlier education they bore an essential part.

Here is the mythological Mount Meru of the Hindus, — "centre of the seven worlds, and seed-vessel of the Universe." Here are Borj and Arvand, the celestial mountain and river of the Persians. Here perhaps is the Eden of the Semites. "Kashmir," says the Mahâbhârata, "is all holy, inhabited by saints." Here is the plateau of Pamer, regarded throughout Asia as the "dome of the world." "Men go to the North," say the Brâhmanas, "to learn speech." Here Manu, the Hindu Noah, led by a fish through the deluge waters, comes to shore on a mountain-top, and when they subside descends to people the Southern land.[1] Here the Greeks saw an ideal climate, allowing every variety of product, wondrously fecund

[1] Śatapatha Brâhmana.

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in plants, animals, and men; and guarded from intrusion by mysterious tribes and half-human creatures, with marvellous powers over the hidden treasures of the earth.[1] It was the great unwritten Bible of Asia, the free field of imagination and faith. Here was Balkh, in Oriental tradition the "Mother of Cities," the starting-point of culture, the birthplace of the Zoroastrian fire. Here are sacred lakes and mystic fountains, the immemorial resort of pilgrims from every quarter of the East. The Chinese Buddhists say that a lake on the summit of the Himâlaya is the origin of all the rivers of the world. And in fact, from the mountain system of which this region is the centre, the great rivers of Asia descend on every side, — the Oxus, the Yaxartes, the Yang-tze-kiang, the Brahmapootra, the Indus, and the Ganges. Again we cannot but recognize an impressive symbol of the wealth and scope of human nature; and not less of its love of broad divergence into special forms, made kindred by far-reaching supplies of one inspiration, ever flowing from central springs.

The Witness.

It is in a spot so rich in spiritual suggestion that we are to seek our earliest data for the Natural History of Religion. What were the resources of human nature at that remote epoch when the ancestors of the principal modern races dwelt on these highlands of Central Asia? It is only of the Indo-European family — comprising the historical Hindus, the Persians, and the various races of Europe, excepting Jews, Turks, Basques, Finns, and Magyars — that we can render a positive answer. And even of this pre-eminent family of nations we cannot speak from data afforded by the ordinary forms of testimony. For we

[1] Curtius, Strabo, Ptolemy.

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have here to do with a period far antecedent, not only to the oldest Bibles of mankind, but even to the very notion of such a thing as the transmission of knowledge. But in these prehistoric deeps, where even the half-blind guides of mythology and tradition fail, we greet a fresh source of scientific certainty. It seems as if the infancy of man became but a starless night, in respect of all those dubious guides by whose aid we penetrate the past, in order that the pure testimony of language, alone illuminating it, might make his divine origin unmistakable. For language is, as the oldest faith and the latest science unite to declare it, an inspiration. It is no arbitrary invention, like the steam engine or the cotton gin; no mere imitation of natural sounds; but the natural result of a perfect correspondence between the outward organ and the inward processes, which must have material expression. Its testimony proceeds from no interested witnesses, from no treacherous prejudices, from no play of imagination, but from the certainties of organic law. Men do not invent names for things of which they have no idea. A people puts its character and its history into its language, without hypocrisy and without reserve. It is a spontaneous creation. The "Word" has always been recognized as the fittest symbol of truth, as the purest manifestation of deity.

This unimpeachable witness it is, that testifies of man in an antiquity where no other is possible. And the most primitive fact we know of his nature is thus a certain unconscious *honesty*, that discloses his inner life without disguise.

It is by the testimony of Language that the nations called Aryan or, more properly, Indo-European, are

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brought into a single class and referred to a common origin.[1] And the next step has been, to recover out of the mass of words or roots common to the languages of these nations as much as possible of the primitive language spoken by the parent race in its prehistoric antiquity previous to dispersion into many branches.[2] The best philological scholarship of the age has been employed upon this reconstruction. It may fairly be said that we are able already to look directly in upon the character and condition of these hitherto unknown ancestors of the Hindu and the Persian, of the Greek and the Roman, the Celt and the Teuton. No achievement of modern science is more brilliant or more marvellous. It is the result of a comparative Philology as subtile as the calculations of Astronomy. It has evoked from human data hitherto unintelligible the substance of a lost language and a forgotten race, as astronomers have applied the strange perturbations of the solar system to effect the discovery of hidden planets. It is not over-confident to claim positive certainty for the general result here stated. Enough is already achieved in this field to justify its most skilful explorers in claiming for it the name of Linguistic Palæontology.[3]

[1] See especially the researches of Burnouf and Bopp.

[2] We do not mean that Pictet, Eichhoff, Schleicher, Kuhn, Fick, and other scholars, have succeeded in reconstructing the language actually spoken by the original Indo-Europeans, out of the radicals afforded by this comparison of tongues. But their researches, though of very unequal value, have resulted in bringing into view a large number of the ideas and objects which that language was used to designate.

[3] Pictet, *Origines Indo-Européenes*, or *Les Aryas Primitifs*. See also Spiegel's *Avesta*, II., *Einleit.* cxi.–cxv.; A. Kuhn in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 321-363; Lassen's *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 527; Müller, *Science of Languages*, 234-236; Duncker, *Gesch. d. Alterthums*, III. 9; Schoebel, *Récherches sur la Religion Prem. de la Race Indo-Europ.* (Paris, 1868); Whitney, *Study of Language* (Lect. V.); Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, II.; Fick, *Wörterbuch d. Indor. Sprache.*

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The Testimony.

The common name by which the Indian and Iranian (or Persian) branches of this great family designated themselves was Aryas (in Zend, Airyas); a title of honor,[1] which now, after thousands of years, returns, in scientific nomenclature, to justify their self-respect by the magnificent record of European civilization. The first fixed datum for our primeval people is therefore their name.

It further appears from these researches that the Aryas lived in fixed habitations, kept herds, and tilled the soil. They occupied a diversified region, richly watered and wooded, and highly metalliferous; its climate, flora, and fauna corresponding with the descriptions of Bactriana which have come down to us from the Greek geographers, and which are confirmed by modern travellers.[2] It was cold enough to stir the blood and to make them number their years by winters. Their houses were roofed, and had windows and doors. Barley, the grain of cool climates, was their commonest cereal. Their wealth was in their cattle. Names for race, tribe, family relations, property and trade, for the inn, the guest, the master, the king, were all taken from words which designated the herd. They called dawn the "mustering time of the cows;" evening, the "hour of bringing them home." They had domesticated the cow, the sheep, the goat, the horse, and the dog. The cow was the "slow walker;" the ox, "the vigorous one;" the dog was "speed;" the wolf, "the destroyer." They used yokes and axles and probably ploughs; wrought in various metals; spun and wove; had vessels made of wood, leather, terracotta, and metal; and musical instruments of

[1] Compare Greek ἀρετή, valor, and German *ehre*, honor.

[2] Pictet, I. 35–42.

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shells and reeds. They counted beyond a hundred. They navigated rivers in oared boats; fought with bows, clubs, bucklers, lances, and swords, in battle chariots and to the sound of trumpets and conchs. They besieged each other in towns; employed spies, and reduced their enemies to some kind of servitude, of which we know not the extent.

Domestic relations rested on sentiments of affection and respect. There are no signs of polygamy. Patriarchal absolutism was tempered by natural instincts. Father meant "the protector;" mother, "the former and disposer;" brother, "the supporter;" and sister, "the careful," or "the consoling, pleasing one." The primitive names of these forms of relationship have been transmitted with slight change through most branches of the Indo-European race even to the present day. And thus the closest domestic ties not only became, as common speech, the symbols of an ethnic brotherhood, which time and space are bound to guard and expand, but were sealed also to immortal meanings for the moral nature by the oldest testimony of mankind. And the affirmations of conscience, the words of the Spirit, were not less clearly pronounced, in other directions.[1]

The Aryas had clear conceptions of the rights of property and definite guarantees for their protection. These guarantees were based on ownership of the soil where the family altar stood, concentrating the sentiment of piety. We see at how early a period men recognized the natural dependence of those necessary conditions of social order, the family and

[1] Kuhn, in Weber's *Ind. Studien*, I. 321–363; Lassen, I. 813; Müller, *Oxford Essays for* 1856; Weber, *Lectura on India* (Berlin, 1854); Müller, *Science of Language*, 236; Pictet, II. 746.

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the home, on fixed and permanent ownership of land. Communistic schemes have never yet succeeded, among the Indo-Europeans, in overcoming this instinctive wisdom, which loyally maintains the Family, the Home, and private Property in Land as mutually dependent factors of civilization. And we may infer from the sacredness attached by the Hindus, Greeks and Romans to *bounds*, whether by stones, or by ploughed trenches, or by vacant spaces, — each family thus marking off its real estate from its neighbors, — that this reverence for property limits was also a trait of the older race of which they were the branches.[1]

The Aryas had formalities for transactions of exchange and sale, for payment of wages, and for the administration of oaths. All the essential elements of social order were evidently present in this primitive civilization, the cradle of historic races. Law was designated by a word which meant *right*. The notion of justice was associated with the straight line, suggestive of directness and impartiality. Transgression meant *falling off*, and oath *constraint*.[2]

Their psychological insight surprises us. They seem to have distinguished clearly the principle of spiritual existence. Soul was not merely vital breath, but thinking being. Thought was recognized as the essential characteristic of man, the same word designating both. For four thousand years man has been called "the thinker." For consciousness, will, memory, the Aryas had words that are not traceable to material symbols. They even made a distinction, it is believed, between concrete existence and abstrac

[1] See De Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, B. I. ch. V.
[2] Pictet, *Les Aryas Primitifs*, II. 237, 427, 435, 456.

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being;[1] a germ of that intellectual vigor which has made the Aryan race the fathers of philosophy. Their language abounded in signs of imaginative and intuitive processes. They believed in spirits, good and evil;[2] and their medical science consisted in exorcising the latter kind by means of herbs and magical formulas.

There are no signs of an established priesthood, nor of edifices consecrated to deities. But terms relating to faith, sacrifice, and adoration, are so abundant as to prove a sincere and fervent religious sentiment. The similarity of meaning in numerous words descriptive of divine forces has seemed to "point to a primitive monotheism, more or less vaguely defined."[3] Yet the Aryas had probably developed a rich mythology before their separation into different branches.[4] They had also firm belief in immortality and in a happy heaven for those who should deserve it,[5] beholding the soul pass forth at death as a shape of air, under watchful guardians, to its upper home. Some of these inferences of linguistic palæontology may require further evidence to give them scientific certainty. But there are other features in the picture of Aryan religious life which admit of no dispute. The word *Div*, designating at once the clear light of the sky, and whatsoever spiritual meanings these simple instincts intimately associated therewith, has endured as the *root-word of worship* for the whole Aryan race: in all its branches the appellatives of Deity are waves of this primal sound, flowing through

[1] Pictet, II. 539-546, 749.

[2] Developed afterwards in the Yâtus and Râkshasas of the Veda, and in correspondent evil spirits of the Avesta. Pictet, I. 633.

[3] Ibid., 720, 690. [4] Ibid., 689. [5] Ibid., 748.

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all its manifold and changing religions with the serene transcendence of an eternal law.

Again, it has been shown[1] that the whole substance of Greek mythology is but the development, with exquisite poetic feeling, of a primitive Aryan stock of names and legends, recognizable through comparison with the Hymns of the Hindu Rig Veda, where they are found, in simpler and ruder forms. In these early yet secondary stages of their development, they represent the daily mystery of solar movement, the swift passage of dawn and twilight, the conflict of day with night, of sunshine with cloud, of drought with fertilizing rain, the stealthy path of the breeze, the rising of the storm wind, the wonder-working of the elements, the loss of all visible forms at night only to return with fresh splendors in the morning. This old Aryan religion of intimacy with the powers of air and sky has in fact been aptly called a *meteorolatry*. And recent scholarship has applied much ingenuity as well as insight, in bringing all Vedic names and legends under the one title of "solar myths," using the word in the wide descriptive sense just indicated. And there can be no doubt that they all are more or less intimately related to natural phenomena, though proceeding primarily, it is none the less true, from moral and spiritual experiences in their makers, as all mythology must do. But what we have now to observe is that the amount of this mythologic lore, inherited by both the Asiatic and European branches of the Aryan race, warrants our ascribing very great productive capacity, both æsthetic and religious,

[1] Especially by the recent researches of Müller. See Cox's *Manual of Mythology* for a popular summary of these. Also the valuable articles of Mr. John Fiske, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for 1871.

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to their common ancestors, the mountain tribes of Central Asia.

And, again, names and traditions, found alike in the Indian Veda and the Iranian Avesta, indicate that these unknown fathers of our art, science, and faith, must have venerated a mountain-plant, and used its sap as a symbol of life renewed through sacrifice;[1] that they believed in a human deliverer, who, after saving men from destruction, had reorganized their reviving forces for social growth;[2] in a human-divine guardian of the world beyond this life;[3] and in a true Aryan hero who slew the serpent of physical and moral evil.[4] And so we learn how early and how cordial was man's prophetic sense of his proper unity with the Order of the Universe, the ideal which it is the main business of all our religion and science to make good.

I add another fact of equal significance. The thought that those patient domestic animals, which gave milk, and bore burdens, and were in other ways indispensable to man, deserved a better lot than they were apt to receive, and that the kind treatment of them was a religious duty, is common to both the Aryan races, and redounds not to their own honor only, but to that of their common progenitors, from whom it must have descended.[5]

Finally, we may infer from the testimony of the

[1] The *Soma* (Zend, *haoma*), or *Asclepias acida*. The haoma was perhaps a different plant, yet must have nearly resembled it.

[2] *Yima* (Iran.) and *Manu* (Ind.). They have common functions as mythical beings, and descend alike from *Vivaswat* (Zend, *Vivanghvat*). See Lassen, I. 517.

[3] *Yama* (Ind.) and *Vohumano* (Iran.). Schoebel points out the curious transference of functions between the four personages just mentioned, in consequence of the separation of the Iranian and Indian branches of the family.

[4] *Trita* (Ind.) and *Thraetona* (Iran.).

[5] Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morg. Geseilsch.*, XXV. 7.

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two related bibles that the oldest Aryas found God in all the forms and functions of Fire; that they had great faith in prayer, as intercourse with Deity in purity and simplicity of trust; and that they were endowed with qualities that help to explain a certain emphasis on sincerity and abhorrence of falsehood, equally characteristic of the precepts of these old ethnic scriptures, and of the reputation of the early Persians and Hindus among the Western races of antiquity.

The sacred Fire, kept kindled on the domestic altar, as the centre of religious sentiment and rite, and as consecrating all social, civil, and political relations, is found to be a common heritage of all Aryan races. Its flame ascended from every household hearth, watched by the *pitris*, or fathers, alive and dead, of this primitive civilization. Modern scholars have traced its profound influence, as type and sacrament of the Family, in shaping the whole religious and municipal life of ancient Greece and Italy.[1]

Not only are the words we now use to designate domestic relations and religious beliefs explained by the radicals of this primitive Aryan tongue, but even our terms for dwellings, rivers, mountains, and nations,[2] are in like manner associated with these patriarchal tribes. So much are we at home among the prehistoric men. The largest part of our knowledge of the ancient Aryas has been reached through Language alone. The fleeting words of a people have become its most enduring record!

And here is the tribute the philologist ends by ac-

[1] See a recent remarkable work by Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique* (Paris, 1870), in which this special subject is presented for the first time, so far as I am aware, in all its bearings, and with great clearness and force.

[2] See Eichhoff, *Grammaire Indo-Européene*, p. 248, 252.

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cording them: "What distinguishes the Aryan race is the harmonious balance of the faculties. It was revealed in the formation of their language, and presided at the opening of their social organization. A happy disposition, in which energy was tempered with mildness; a lively imagination, and strong reasoning faculty; a spirit open to impressions of beauty; a true sense of right; a sound morality and elevated religious instincts,—united to give them, with the consciousness of personal value, the love of liberty and the constant desire of progress."[1]

I add the impressive words of Renan: "When the Aryan race shall have become master of the planet, its first duty will be to explore the myste[illegible] depths of Bokhara and Little Thibet, where so much that is of immense value to science probably lies concealed. How much light must be thrown on the origin of language when we shall find ourselves in presence of the localities where those sounds were first uttered which we still employ, and where those intellectual categories were first formed which guide the movement of our faculties! Let us never forget that no amount of progress can enable us to dispense with the verbal and grammatical forms spontaneously chosen by the primeval patriarchs of the Imaus, who laid the foundations of what we are and of what we shall be."[2]

[1] Pictet, II. 755.
[2] *De l'Origine du Langage*, p. 232.

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II.

THE HINDU MIND.

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THE HINDU MIND.

A GREAT civilization is a collective personality. Like great men, whom the past does not account for, it is a mystery of genius and spiritual gravitation. Races at the dawn of history.

We can report the conditions of its development. We can trace climatic and historical influences that have educated it. Behind these we note determinative qualities of race, which, while constantly modified by such external forces, are yet inexplicable by them. The word "race," moreover, is used quite indefinitely, and, like "species," serves but to prove the limitations of our science. It is applied to kinds of relation widely differing not in breadth only, but in origin and substantial meaning. Thus the term "Aryan" or "Semitic" marks a class of unities wholly distinct from that designated by such terms as "Teutonic" and "Hebrew;" and these again differ to an equal extent from that kind of unity which would constitute races as American, African, or Polynesian.

But, in whatever sense conceived, races are fragmentary; and the growth of civilization is dependent on their fusion. However we may decide the question of their origin, it is certain that, when we mark their first appearance in history, it is their incompleteness

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that most impresses us. This embryological phase, it is true, combines the just apparent germs of those forces which subsequent stages of growth must differentiate and develop. Yet, while each race is thus endowed with all properly human elements, it manifests some one of them out of all proportion to the rest. The very exaggeration, however, is both present vigor and prospect of reaction. The law of progress must at last bring out all the diverse energies of races, and blend them in due proportion, in the nobler humanity that is yet to come.

The Special Types.

The Oriental races in antiquity, though by no means without mutual intercourse, did not attain real fusion. Owing to peculiar circumstances, climatic and other, they have not yet attained it. They are still isolated columns, awaiting their place in that universal temple of religion, politics, and culture, which our widest experience is as yet inadequate to design.

I venture to borrow from the physical world an illustration, which may serve to indicate the general result of their ethnological qualities. It is, I need hardly say, symbolical merely, and not to be taken either in a materialistic sense, or as defining impassable limits of race capacity.

The Hindu mind is subtle, introversive, contemplative. It spins its ideals out of its brain substance, and may properly be called *cerebral*. The Chinese — busy with plodding, uninspired labor, dealing with pure ideas to but little result, yet wonderfully efficient in the world of concrete facts and uses — may be defined as *muscular*. And the Persian, made for mediating between thought and work, apt alike at turning speculation into practice, and raising practice to fresh speculation, so leading out of the ancient form of civil-

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ization into the modern, no less plainly indicates a *nervous* type.

We observe therefore that in the dawn of history, and more or less through its later periods in the East, the brain was dreaming here, while hands were drudging there; and yet again, elsewhere, the swift nerve, made to ply between brain and hand, was unduly preponderant over both. Here are great disadvantages for the growth of ethical and spiritual capacity, the natural bloom of due proportion and right understanding between the faculties. So that it would be not a little encouraging to us as students of universal religion, and lovers of its progress and its promise, if these imperfect societies should reveal even germs, which familiar appliances might seem competent to expand into noble forms of thought and desire. Better still, if these forms themselves are found to have spontaneously arisen in such races, in despite of the adverse conditions.

Our first study is of the Hindu. I have called the mind of this race, or more properly of the Aryan portion of the population of India, the Brain of the East, isolated from muscle and nerve. By this I do not mean that either of the latter elements was absent. On the contrary, many of the tribes into which these Aryan Hindus were divided, — and the *semi*-Aryan, mountain tribes generally, — have shown very decided military tendencies; while the race, as a whole, is agricultural, and nowise wanting in industry or perseverance, as their development of the physical resources of the country and the wonders of their architecture amply prove.[1] The Hindu Mind.

Nevertheless, the contemplative faculty seems com-

[1] See illustrations in Craufurd's *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. x.

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petent to the control of these and all other tendencies, shaping them in the long run to speculative rather than material or practical results. The most impressive works of Hindu genius are modes of celebrating the power of meditation. The Rig Veda sings of the "deep sea of mind." And it has been finely said that the name, "Father of gods and men," which the Greeks loved to give to the ocean, would well apply to India, that immeasurable sea of dogmas and beliefs.[1]

Productivity.

The latest philosophical and religious systems lay prefigured in the depths of this Hindu Brain. It exhausted most forms of devotional mysticism and subtle speculation. In these spheres "it left its pupils little to learn from Zeno or Aristotle, or the controversies of later theology." It created one of the most artistic languages, and one of the richest literatures, in the world. It compiled elaborate Law Codes in great numbers, and, besides its voluminous Bibles, gathered immense treasures of sacred lore, ritual, philosophical, devotional. Its poetic productivity was prodigious. Its great epics, the Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata, containing the one 50,000, the other 200,000 lines, glow with a luxuriance of imagery which contrasts with the Iliad or Æneid as the stupendous vegetation of India differs from that of Italy or Greece. All that this colossal people have dreamed or done, in philosophy, mythology, ethics, in imaginative or didactic thought, is here transmuted into song. The Hindu alone has made his whole life and experience an epic. These two great accretions of rhythmic lore represent a constant necessity for such expression in all ages of Hindu history. In

[1] *Ballanche*, quoted in Laprade's *Sentiment de la Nature avant le Christianisme*, p. 115.

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their main substance they go back as far as the fourth or fifth century before our era. Many of their legends may be referred to a much earlier period. And, while their relations to each other are not very clearly settled, this at least is certain, — that in both have been worked over very ancient Vedic myths from age to age, in the interest of fresh experiences, all taken up, as they came, into this epical transfiguration. Such the creative imagination of the race.[1]

Disunity.

Yet it could never organize itself into one united nation. From the beginning this vast peninsula, one-third as large as Europe, has been divided among a multitude of distinct tribes. The little kingdoms warred with each other; and now and then some greater chief would master his neighbors on every side, and build up some brilliant dynasty, like the Maurya or the Gupta, or in later times the Mahratta, and perhaps organize a wide movement for Hindu independence: all of which would last a little while, and then disappear, like cirrus streamers in the blue deeps of the Indian sky, or fleeting thoughts in the heaven of Hindu dreams. It was the mutual jealousy and strife of the Hindu kings, not the lack of military spirit nor of military resources, that made this great people a prey to the invading Moslem from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries of our era. A glut of food in one English province of India has often occurred at the same time with a famine in an adjoining one; yet the intercourse between them has been insufficient to make the abundance of the one supply the lack of

[1] The *Râmâyana* has been translated into Italian by Gorresio, and into French by Fauche. Monier Williams has given a careful abstract of it, as also of the Mahâbhârata, in his admirable little volume on *Indian Epic Poetry*, and a new English rhymed version by Griffith is in course of publication. Many of the finest episodes in both poems will be found translated in Jolowicz's *Orientalische Poesie*.

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the other.[1] There are at this very day, it is estimated,[2] twenty-one distinct nations in India, each of which possesses a language in many respects peculiar to itself. "Villages lie side by side for a thousand years, without any considerable intermixture of these distinct tongues." Hindustâni in the north of India and Tamil in the south, represent, generally, the difference between the two great classes of languages derived respectively from the Aryan and the indigenous, perhaps Negrito, perhaps Turanic, tribes. But, however widely diffused, these two types but feebly express the diversities of speech which render the writings of Hindustâni schools in Bombay unintelligible to races in the north-west of India, and make it more easy for an educated native of that city to hold intercourse with one from Bengal or Madras in English than in any other tongue.[3]

Political organization.

The earlier Hindus had well-organized governments, much lauded by the Greek writers, to whom we owe our earliest reliable notices of India, for the wise and thoughtful manner in which the interests of trade and agriculture were protected, the wants of strangers, as of the sick and needy, supplied, and the defence of the state secured.[4] The law-books contain minute regulations for freights and markets, and just rules for partnerships and organizations in trade, for testing weights, measures, and money, and punishing dishonest dealing.[5] And the organization of the village communities throughout

[1] *Westminster Review*, July, 1859.

[2] Mackay's *Reports on Western India*, p. 29.

[3] Perry on the Distribution of the Languages of India, *Journal of Roy. Asiatic Soc.* (Bombay branch), for January, 1853.

[4] See especially Megasthenes, in Strabo, *De Situ Orbis*, B. xv.

[5] See Lassen, in *Ztschr. d. D. M. G.* (1862).

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Northern India, from very early times, was an elaborate system of local self-government, that showed how large an amount of personal and social freedom could be maintained, even under the depressing shadow of caste. But these steps in political science never led onwards to unity and nationality, nor to any form of constructive policy on a large scale, or for a common end.

India has at all times been famous for its domestic and foreign trade. In the early days of the Roman Empire, it was a great commercial centre for the merchants of Italy and Egypt, as it was at a much earlier period for all Asiatic races, from Phœnicia in the West to China in the East. The oldest codes record a very advanced system of commercial exchanges among the Hindu tribes, regulated by wise and just provisions; and a high respect for trade is shown by the permission granted the Brahmans, in violation of caste, to earn their support by assuming the functions of the Vaiśya, or mercantile class.[1] In more than one epoch, the resources of India, natural and industrial as well as intellectual, have made the wealth of great empires.[2] Its delicate tissues, its marvellous colors and dyes, its porcelains, its work in metals and precious stones, its dainty essences and perfumes, have not only been the wonder and delight of Europe, but in no slight degree helped in the revival of art. But, after all, the Hindus have shown little practical enterprise, and there was a certain passive quality in their best performance; even in that fine manipulation that wove gossamer fabrics, and wrought the precious metals with such eminent suc-

Foreign Relations.

[1] *Manu*, X. 83; *Yâjnavalkya*, III.; Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, II. 572–576.
[2] See Craufurd, *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. xiii.

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cess. It has been believed that they could have taken little pains to export these products, since the sailor was held in slight respect by their laws; that most of their trade was carried in foreign bottoms; and that the Mohammedans first introduced coinage among them, their only previous currency being shells.[1] We read indeed of wealthy merchants in their dramatic works, and traces of their mercantile establishments are found far to the east and west of India. Yet, on the whole, it is probable that other nations had to come to them. They have always been mainly an agricultural people, the whole population averaging only about one hundred to the square mile. Their scholars did not travel. Only a great religious and moral inspiration, like Buddhism, could rouse Hindu thought to seek geographical expansion. Only here and there we find traces of embassies; and these, mainly for political objects, to the courts of China, Rome, and Egypt. Yet the intellectual life of India was profoundly felt throughout the ancient world. Greece, Persia, Egypt even, went to sit at the feet of these serene dreamers on the Indus and under the banyan shades, from the time of Alexander downwards; and there they marvelled at the power of philosophy to achieve ideal virtue. And what treasures of European fable, legend, and mythic drama further testify to the extent of our indebtedness to India in the sphere of imagination and fancy, down to the magic mirror, the golden egg, the purse of Fortunatus, the cap of invisibility!

The Hindus reasoned of war itself as if it were a flash out of the brain, a piece of metaphysics.[2]

Sciences.

[1] *Journal Roy. As. Soc. of Bengal* (Philolog., 1867).

[2] See the *Bhagavadgitâ*.

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They loved to press beyond material successions or conditions to general forms and essential processes; pursuing with special success those studies that afford the largest field for abstraction and contemplation, — the orderly movement of the stars, the laws of numbers, the structure of language, the processes of thought. They made much progress in analytic arithmetic, and not only applied algebra to astronomy and geometry, but geometry to the demonstration of algebraic rules.[1] They seem to have invented numerical signs and the decimal system; the zero itself being of Sanskrit descent, and the old Hindu figures being still clearly traceable in those of the later Arabic digits. The introduction of these numerical signs in place of the alphabetic characters before used by all other nations of antiquity — a change ascribed by old writers to the Pythagoreans, those Orientalists of the Greek world, but probably an importation from India through the Arabians of Bagdad — was the finest ideal impulse ever given to arithmetical studies. The decimal system was developed in India as a speculative calculus so earnestly, that special names were given to every power in an ascending scale of enormous reach. The fifty-third power of ten was taken as a unit, and on this new base another scale of numbers rose till a figure was reached consisting of unity followed by four hundred and twenty-one zeros. And these elements were applied to the solution of ideal problems, such as "the number of atoms containable in the limits of the world taken as a fixed dimension;" representing mathematical reality none the less for being so utterly past conception.[2] The Arabians

[1] Colebrooke, *Hindu Algebra*, Introd., pp. xiv., xv.
[2] Woepcke., *Mem. sur les Chiffres Indiens*, in *Journal Asiatique* (1863).

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called the Indian arithmetic the "sandgrain calculus." Eighteen centuries ago at least, the Hindus had elaborate systems of arithmetical mnemonics, based on numerical values attached to letters of the alphabet.[1] "They reached a stage of algebraic science," says Weber, "which was not arrived at in Europe till the close of the last century; and, if their writings had been known a century earlier, they would certainly have created a new epoch."[2] Aryabhatta, their greatest astronomer and mathematician, in the fourth century determined very closely the relation of the diameter of a circle to the circumference, and applied it to the measurement of the earth.[3] They invented methods also for solving equations of a high degree.

In the time of Alexander they had geographical charts; and their physicians were skilful enough to win the admiration of the Greeks. Their investigations in medicine have been of respectable amount and value, lending much aid to the Arabians, the fathers of European medical science, especially in the study of the qualities of minerals and plants.[4] In much of their astronomy they anticipated the Arabians; their old Siddhântas, or systematic treatises on the subject, indicating a long period of previous familiarity with scientific problems. And in such honor did they hold this science that they ascribed its origin to Brahma. They made Sarasvati, their goddess of numbers, the parent of nearly a hundred children, who were at once musical modes and celestial cycles.[5] They gave names to the great constellations, and noted the motions of heavenly bodies three thousand

[1] Lassen, II. 1140.
[2] *Lecture on India.*
[3] Lassen, II. 1138–1146.
[4] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 238.
[5] Creuzer, *Relig. de l'Antiq.*, p. 261.

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years ago. The Greeks appear to have derived much aid from their observations of eclipses, as well as to have been in some astronomical matters their teachers. Lassen mentions the names of thirteen astronomers distinguished in their annals. A Siddhânta declares that the earth is round, and stands unsupported in space. The myth of successive foundations, such as the elephant under the tortoise, is rejected for good and sufficient reasons in one of these works, as involving the absurdity of an endless series. "If the last term of the series is supposed to remain firm by its inherent power, why may not the same power be supposed to reside in the first, that is in the earth itself?"[1]

Aryabhatta appears to have reached by independent observations the knowledge of the earth's movement on its axis;[2] and to have availed himself of the science of his time in calculating the precession of the equinoxes and the length of the orbital times of planets.[3]

Especially attractive to Hindu genius were Grammar and Philosophy. They alone among nations have paid honors to grammarians, holding them for divine souls, and crowning them with mythical glories. Panini in the fourth century B.C. actually composed four thousand sutras, or sections, in eight books, of grammatical science, in which an adequate terminology may be found for all the phenomena of speech.[4]

Grammar.

[1] *Siddhânta Siromani*, quoted by Muir, IV. 97.

[2] Colebrooke (Essay II.) quotes his words: "The starry firmament is fixed: it is the earth which, continually revolving, produces the rising and setting of the constellations."

[3] See Lassen, II. 1143–1146. Also, Craufurd, *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. viii. The views of Lassen and Weber as to the origin and age of Hindu astronomy are criticised by Whitney, whose opinions are entitled to very high respect. These criticisms, however, do not affect the substance of what is here stated.

[4] Lassen, II. 479.

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His works have been the centre of an immense literature of commentation, surpassed in this respect by the Vedas alone. No people of antiquity investigated so fully the laws of euphony, of the composition and derivation of words. "It is only in our own century, and incited by them," says Weber, "that our Bopp, Humboldt, and Grimm have advanced far beyond them."[1] The Hindu Grammar is the oldest in the world. The Nirukta of Yâska belongs probably to the seven h century B.C., and quotes older writings on the sa. .e subject.[2] In whatsoever concerns the study of words and forms of thought, the Hindus have always been at home; anticipating the Greeks, and accomplishing more at the outset of their career than the Semitic race did in two thousand years.

History. Yet not more than the Semites are they inclined to pure history. There are, it should seem, no reliable Hindu annalists. The only sources of important historical information are the records of royal endowments and public works preserved in the temples, and the inscriptions on monuments and on coins, fortunately discovered in large numbers, and covering many periods otherwise wholly unknown. The scattered Brahmanical Chronicles of several kingdoms are but dynastic lists and meagre allusions. The Buddhists, on the other hand, have made a really serious study of history, though even they have not had enough of the critical faculty to distinguish fact from legend. It is only by careful study, and comparison with Greek, Chinese, and other testimony, that their voluminous records can be made to yield the very great wealth of historical truth they really contain. There are in fact

[1] *Lecture on India* (Berlin, 1854), p. 28.
[2] Renan, *Langues Sémitiques*, 365.

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only two general histories of India from native sources; one quite recent, and the other dating from the fourteenth century. A most valuable Indian chronicle is, however, the Buddhist Mahâvanśa, which gives a more complete and trustworthy account of Ceylon, reaching from the earliest times down to the last century, than we possess of any other Oriental State except China.[1] For determining chronology, there are as yet few landmarks; both Brahmans and Buddhists making free use of sacred and mystic numbers, with whose multiples they strive to express a haunting sense of interminable space and time. But though the mythology of the latter deals in extravagances beyond all parallel, they far surpass the Brahmans in serious historical purpose, in observation of human affairs, and in the taste for recording actual events.[2] Their earliest Sutras are of great value in the investigation of an epoch of which we have scarcely any other record. This superiority as chroniclers is due in part to their freedom from caste; a system whose theoretic immobility and practical lack of motive, either for the backward or the forward look, forbid the growth of a historic sense. They differ from the Brahmans also in a deeper interest in *the human for its own sake*. A philosophy which wholly absorbs man in Deity cannot allow that independent value to the details of life, the recognition of which is an indispensable condition of historical study. How to escape the flow of transient events, and know only the Eternal One, was the Brahmanical problem; and it would seem quite incompatible with even observing the details of posi-

[1] Lassen, II. 13, 16.

[2] Of the services of Buddhist literature to the geographical and historical study of India, see a just recognition in St. Martin's *Géographie du Veda* (Introd.), Paris, 1860.

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tive fact, not to speak of tracing the chain of finite causes and effects. It is only remarkable that the Brahmans should have shown any capacity whatever in this direction. Especial notice is therefore due to the opinion of a thoroughly competent scholar that they have not indulged in conscious invention, and the falsification of facts, to such extent as would justify European writers in casting stones at them on this account.[1]

The historic sense is indeed by no means wanting, at least in certain directions. We are told that, in every village of the Panjâb, the bard, who fills in India the place which in Europe is taken by the "Herald's Office," can give the name of every proprietor who has held land therein since its foundation, many hundreds of years ago, and that the correctness of these records is capable of demonstration.[2] It would, in fact, be far from becoming, in the present state of Sanskrit studies, to deny that the Hindus have ever written genuine history. The destructive effect of the climate of India on written documents is of itself a discouragement to literary pursuits, and to the preservation of records.

Force of the contemplative element.

Yet we cannot overlook their natural propensity to reluct at limitation by positive facts, and to the objective authority of details. This was not owing, as in a great degree with the Semites, to intensity of passion and the worship of autocratic caprice, but to a *stronger attraction towards pure thought*. Whatever they may have accomplished in astronomy and medicine, an ideal generalization was always easier to them than observation. The

[1] Lassen, II. 7.

[2] Griffin's *Rajahs of the Panjâb*, p. 494.

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Hindu has, after all, effected little in the purely practical sciences; almost as little as the Hebrew did in ancient times, and in his distinctively Semitic capacity. But while the Hebrew failed here by reason of his defective appreciation of natural laws, and his appetite for miracle and sign, the Hindu, belonging to a family in which the scientific faculty is supreme, failed for a different reason; namely, his excessive love of abstraction and contemplation. This enfeebled the sense of real limits. His imagination spurned the paths of relation and use. It dissolved life into intellectual nebula, and then tried to create the worlds anew, weaving ideal shapes and movements in phantasmal flow, out of this star-dust of thought.

Its boundless desire to bring the universe under one conception, and make it flow for ever from Mind as the perfect unity and sole reality, *by contemplative disciplines alone*, — though one-sided and ill-balanced, was yet a magnificent aspiration in days when practical and social wisdom was in its infancy. Limit, the true balance of ideal and actual, fate and freedom, divine and human, — limit, which is not limitation, but harmony and order and justice of the parts to the whole, — this, the inspiration of Greek genius, the Hindu did not know. Compare his art with the Egyptian and the Greek. Egyptian sculpture is a plain prose record of actual life; or else it binds the idea within fixed types, which are conventional, and, though often grandly serene, everywhere mechanically repeated and allegorically defined. Greek sculpture demonstrates the capacity of the Human Form for every æsthetic purpose, embodying divine ideas therein with pure content and noble freedom. Here Œdipus has solved the riddle, and pronounced the answer, —

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Man. But in Hindu Art you see mythological fancy overpowering real life; and, instead of the actual human form, a boundless exaggeration and reduplication of its parts, a deluge of symbolic figures, gathered from every quarter and heaped in endless and stupendous combinations, the negation of limit and of law.[1] Every thing here is colossal. This aspiration to enfold the Whole cannot find images vast enough to satisfy its purpose. It excavates mountains, piling chambers upon chambers through their depths, for mile after mile of space.[2] It carves them into monstrous monolithic statues of animals and gods. It brings the elephant to uphold its columns, and stretches their shafts along the heavy vaults of Ellora and Karli, like the interminable spread of the banyan trunks in its tropical forests. Its temples represent the universe itself; gathering all elements and forms around central deity, yet seldom pausing to bring out of these forms the artistic beauty of which they are *individually* capable. Intellectual abstraction — as of mind fascinated by the vague sense of cosmic wholeness, and not yet definitely constructive — excluded Art, except in the one grand, all-enfolding form of Architecture. And here sculpture is involved; yet not as with the Greek, in separate freedom, but adherent to the whole edifice, and absorbed in it, save in the instances of a few special forms of statuary.

Its significance.

The contemplative element did not fail at last to engulf outward forms, and even human personality, to an extent elsewhere unparalleled.

[1] See Kugler's *Kunstgeschichte*, p. 121; Renan in Nott's *Indigenous Races*, p. 103; Ramée, *Hist. de l'Architecture*, vol. i.

[2] There are forty series of caves in Western India; and at Ellora the architecture extends more than two miles.

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But we should say that these facts had not yet reached their real values for the mind, rather than that the values themselves were denied. At the least we are allured by the sense of an immeasurable scope in these mystical aspirations to unity with God, which bears witness of genuine intuition. Here abides an illimitable Whole, instead of the manifold symbols of special faith, that have come to stand out, for our sharper Western understanding, in mutually exclusive and even hostile attitudes, plainly enough needing to recognize some higher unity, even though it were by suggestion of the Hindu dream.

To appreciate the results of these contemplative tendencies, we must recall the old Aryan worship of the clear Light of Day. It seems to have given place, in the development of Hindu thought, to its exact opposite, of which the gloom of the Forest and the Cave would be a truer symbol. But it is in fact not lost. It is transformed into an *inward* representative and analogue, becoming a worship of the serener Light of Meditation. It is this divinity, which with full confidence in its power to pass through and dissolve all possible barriers, is here invoked to illumine mystic depths, whether of matter or mind, which the outward sunlight cannot pierce. This aspect of Hinduism must not be forgotten, when, in order to see its true embodiment, we endeavor to picture to ourselves those sunless caves of Ellora and Elephanta; where columns and symbolic statues loom dim and colossal through a silent abyss, and only the mystical imagination finds play, losing itself in its own hovering phantoms; those deeps where all shape is spell-bound, and all action dream; where puny, awe-struck men light up some little patch of lifeless wall with

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feeble torches, or wake some little space around them with half-whispered words, — a wizard gleam, a stealthy sound, — and all is dark again and still. To make these profound sepulchral recesses of nature and art endurable, light must have shone through them from an Invisible Sun.

The Language.

The Hindu thinker found Deity most near to him, not as Person nor as visible Shape, but as *Word*, the symbol of pure thought, in his own marvellous Sanskrit. It was in language, the most purely intellectual, most nearly spiritual, of all human products, — and we might almost say it was in language only, — that he showed absolute mastery in constructive work. With pious zeal he perfected and transmitted this, the express image of his ideal life. He wrought it out in love and faith and patience, in the depths of mind, far back in antiquity, without aid from abroad; and then slowly developed or decomposed this divine "Word" into many popular dialects, — still holding its purest form sacred and inviolable.[1] "Speech, melodious Vâch," says the Rig Veda, "was queen of the Gods; generated by them, and divided into many portions."[2] So grew up this typical language, if not the norm of Indo-European speech, yet the centre and hearth of this brotherhood of tongues; revealing their several resources through the wealth of its radical forms and structural aptitudes. Its rich grammatical elements are combined with unequalled simplicity of law. It is pre-eminent among languages

[1] The Sanskrit was the vernacular tongue of Northern India in early times. It began to die out in the ninth century B.C. In the sixth it was no longer spoken. In the third it became a sacred language; and by the fifth of the Christian era was established as such throughout India. (See Benfey, in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 143.) Muir has carefully traced it back to Vedic times, and shown that the oldest hymns were composed in the every-day speech of their authors.

[2] R. V., VIII. 89, 10; X. 125.

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in creative faculty, in flexional and verbal development; full of terms descriptive of intellectual and spiritual processes; deficient only in those which relate to practical details. The profound thirst of the Hindu mind for unity is indicated in its wonderful synthetic power of fusing radical words into composites; so great, that a Sanskrit verse of thirty syllables may be made to contain but a single word. Its makers gave it a name which means *perfected*, and not perfected only, but *adorned;* for to them Beauty was in the Word of the Mind, not the Work of the Hand. This was their Kosmos. They created it by pure force of native genius, and as in sport; when, and in how long a time, we know not. We know only that it was too near and too dear to their hearts to need letters for its transmission. It is a mature product when we first find it in the oldest Vedas, which were preserved without an alphabet for ages, in the memory alone. At last came writing. Then as sound had been "God's music," so letters became the chords thereof.[1] The Sanskrit letters are not transformed picture-signs, but something more abstract and intellectual. They are phonetic, symbols of articulate sounds. Infinite was the toil the Hindu grammarians for thousands of years expended in developing the laws of euphonic structure; drawing from this fine and facile tongue of theirs as from a perfect instrument, with what has been called a "profound musical feeling," harmonious assonances more regular and delicate than the Greek. They referred its primal sounds to the organs by which they were severally shaped. And, with a presentiment of scientific truth, they sought to divine an essential relation,

[1] Karma Mimânsâ.

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existing in the nature of things, between the sounds of words and the objects they represented.[1] They went so far as to trace back the whole language to about fifteen hundred root-words, to all of which they ascribed distinct meanings. Eichhoff enumerates nearly five hundred of these in his Indo-European Grammar, fully illustrating the clear light they throw upon the comparative etymology of this whole family of languages.[2]

But it was not till the Buddhist reaction that the uses of writing were recognized. The Brahmanical laws indicate contempt of this instrument for the diffusion of truth. Was their opposition based partly on the fact of its democratic tendencies, as was that of the Christian Church afterwards to the invention of printing?

Practical and physical interests.

Recent writers have described the Hindus as ignorant and wasteful, careless to better their condition, lacking in comprehension of the uses of money. They have pointed to the primitive and almost worthless structure of their ploughs and other agricultural implements; to the comparative absence of variety and ingenuity in their earlier attempts at construction in the useful arts; to the imperfection of their materials for dye-work, glass-blowing, and all chemical operations, and especially their disabilities in art from the want of substantial stonewares and fire-bricks for furnaces; and to the lack of all provision in their laws for the protection of mechanical, artistic, or literary genius in the fruit of their labors. Much of this is the result of depressing causes in the history of the last few centuries. It is certainly in many respects in striking contrast with

[1] Karma Mimânsâ. [2] Eichhoff, pp. 21, 29, 162.

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the state of the fine as well as of the useful arts, as described in the old national epics and dramas, as in the account of India, with special reference to Buddhist art, given by Fahian, the "Chinese Pilgrim," in the fifth century. British officials describe many of the tax-free lands as showing marks of agricultural skill quite equal to those of Western Europe.[1] Nor must we do injustice to the genius that may show itself in the very use of crude conditions. The Hindu woman, working up raw cotton into thread for the incomparable muslins they call "running waters" or "webs of woven air," with no other instrument than a fish-bone, a hand roller, and a little spindle turning in a bit of shell, is at all events an artist, endowed with the rare gift of making the most of simplest and nearest materials. The above unfavorable report is certainly exaggerated. But enough of truth remains in it to indicate that there are drawbacks in the qualities of this race to steady progress in practical directions, without impulse from abroad.

The Hindu mastered many physical uses. Yet he was, on the whole, disinclined to the labor of developing them. His passive temperament was unsuited for material progress, having little curiosity and little zeal for conflict with reluctant nature. The caste-system was an exponent of his dislike of movement. His favorite games are dice and chess; the latter his own invention, his typical gift to all civilized races; and both answering to the combination of a passive body with a speculative mind. The pivot of most Hindu philosophy has been the pure unreality of phenomena. It was as if this busy brain, debarred from social construction, teeming with thoughts it

[1] *Speeches before the British India Society* (1839-40).

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could not liberate into the world of action, had declined to accept all external tests of validity whatever. And the history of its metaphysical speculation proves in many ways that man cannot live by Thought alone.

It is not implied that these tendencies shape the whole current of Hindu thought. We do not forget how the people of India have gloried in their great epochs of wide literary culture. We do not forget that twice at least, in their history, all the rays of Oriental learning, science, and song were gathered into a focus of free energy, — at the brilliant courts of Vikramâditya, the companion of poets, and Akbar, the "Guardian of Mankind." We do not forget the opportunity constantly open, on this great mustering ground of nations, for the friction of races and the sympathy of religions. Nor can we overlook that passionate love of the Hindus for dramatic personation, — the sign of a wide scope of the imaginative and sympathetic faculties, — which has shown such productivity in their literature, and makes the social delight of every village in the land.

The results of excessive abstraction and contemplation, even in India, are equally far from encouraging the widely held belief that these mental habits are devoid of noble uses. The reactions to realism that were involved in their natural processes of development will claim our admiration. And we are especially to study the splendid capacity, philosophical and religious, — or both, since the two in Oriental life are substantially one, — which was brought out in the *endeavor* to live by Thought alone.

Force of Physical Nature.

It should seem that personal energy belongs of right to the Hindu, as a member of that Indo-European family of nations, in whom a vigorous

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practical genius, whether as Persian, Greek, Roman, or Teutonic, appears to be inherent and irrepressible. How is it that, in his case, the old Aryan manliness and vigor have yielded to enervation, and the instincts of liberty and progress comparatively failed? Though the extent of this failure has been greatly overstated, there is truth enough in the prevailing estimate to mark an exceptional fact, which requires explanation. It is doubtless an extreme illustration of the power of *climatic conditions*. In every other instance Aryan migration has been westward or north-westward: in this alone it has been southward. The dreamy and passive element obtained mastery only after the tribes had penetrated the whole breadth of Northern India from the Indus eastwards, and settled in the sultry valley of the Ganges; where to this day it is scarcely possible to rear children of English blood, without annual migrations to the cooler hills.[1] Montesquieu has suggested,[2] as one cause of the general absence of practical energy and free progress in the Asiatic races, the fact that Asia has not, like Europe, — and we may add America, — a temperate zone open in all directions, where races of equal force can enter into free mutual relations, whether of collision or of combination. Her tribes are brought together only by sharp transitions of climate; and easy conquests by superior physical vigor are followed by rapid enervation of the conquerors, whose movement, from obvious causes, has usually been from the mountains to the plains. The descent of the Aryans into a tropic wilderness, where the invigorating alternations of summer and winter

[1] See Jeffrey's *British Army in India*, Appendix.
[2] *Esprit des Lois*, XVII. 3.

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were wanting, and every day renewed the same bewildering luxuriance of leafage, blossom, and fruit throughout the year, was subject to these transforming conditions. We should naturally expect that these hardy mountaineers, sweeping down from their cool eyries in the Hindu Kuh and Kashmir, into a land wherein

> "the languid air did swoon,
> Breathing like one that had a heavy dream,
> A land where all things always seemed the same," —

would lose intellectual muscle and nerve. The colossal unity and simplicity of movement in the natural world would be reflected in their mental processes; and an atmosphere heavy with perfumes would lull them to rest in mystical reverie.

We may easily exaggerate these forces, as well as the enervation we adduce them to explain. Portions of India have a cool and bracing atmosphere; and the tribes that occupy the higher levels are vigorous, active, and enterprising. But the climate of the lowlands, where Hindu culture has had its centre, although modified by the wind and rain of the wet season, is in all essential respects determined by the tropical heats. A colossal vegetation covers this rich alluvion, through which enormous rivers flow from the Himâlaya to the sea, enclosed between vast mountain ranges on the north and lofty plateaus on the south. An almost vertical Sun, whose beams have ever held the Hindu's love and awe, — all the more strongly because relied on to smite the sensitive head of the invading Englishman, while they have been slowly transforming the texture of his own dark skin till it ceased to suffer from their shafts, — has proved master

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of the very movement of his thought, and disposed it to the languor of contemplation and the melting passivity of dreams.

Intellectual reactions and results.

Yet that Aryan vitality, which in the North turned to Teutonic sinew and in the West to Persian and Hellenic nerve, even here wrought its special wonders. Its brain, self-centred, enclosed in tropical forests and under all-mastering heats, and without the fine stimulation from climate and the intermingling of vigorous races which the Greek enjoyed, nevertheless became an immensely productive force. And the fact tends to show that, while climatic or other physical conditions modify original spiritual forces, they are not adequate to explain civilizations, nor to supply the inspiration which sustains and directs them. The elements which characterize the later development of Hindu mind were, as we shall see, present in its infancy. The solitude and heat of the Indian wilderness gave it no new forces, but subserved a certain original ethnic personality, its special essence; some of whose qualities indeed they forced into excessive action, thereby provoking the others to bring out their latent strength in energetic reactions. Such historical results as these have an important bearing on the philosophy of development, by which modern science seeks to interpret the growth of man. They illustrate the truth which all evolutionists affirm, that no historical changes require to be explained by creative interference with the natural order. But they also tell against the tendency which prevails, in many scientists of this class, to mistake the physical conditions of phenomena for their productive cause, and to ignore forces, inexplicable by such conditions, which work in every step of the process, involving the *precedence*

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and creativity of mind, and constituting *spiritual substance;* more or less enduring forms of which appear in race, in personality, and in the constancy and wisdom of natural law.

As it is not incapacity, so it is by no means pure enervation that we note in the passive quality of Hindu temperament. It is rather, as one has well defined it, an "inclination towards repose;" a constant reference to coming rest, alike in things material and spiritual, as the consummation of endeavor and the end of strife; explicable in part by the recurrence of a sultry, relaxing season, as the predestined end of the climatic year, and the most salient fact of its monotonous round. This is of course compatible with a degree of active energy. The religion of Brahman and Buddhist alike was aspiration to repose; yet its disciplines were pursued with incomparable energy and zeal.

"If the Hindus are not enterprising," says Lassen, "they are industrious, wherever they have real labors to perform. They show much power of endurance, and bear heavy burdens with patience. And they avoid toils and dangers more from a dislike to have their quiet disturbed, than from want of courage; a quality in which they are well known to be in no way deficient." [1]

The freedom and force of self-conscious manhood could hardly be expected of a people who were migrating further and further into tropical lowlands and wildernesses. The keen goads of the mountain air were forgotten. Lassitude crept over the will and relaxed the practical understanding, till they seemed to lie buried in the helplessness of dreams, confounded with this overwhelming life of physical nature; and

[1] Lassen, I. pp. 411, 412.

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their place came to be defined by the philosopher as that stage in human development where man as yet knows not that he is other than the world in which he dwells. But, if we look more closely, we shall find that the facts are not wholly as they have seemed, and that the severity of the Hegelian formula is far from fairly representing them; since man is not here as an embryo in the womb of nature, but as living force that reacts upon it, though with little help from the practical understanding. And, if we listen attentively, we become assured that even the somnambulism of the soul may be inspired; hearing from these dreamers, also, who at least have faith in their dream, not a few of those accents

"of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost."

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III.

THE RIG VEDA.

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"I have proclaimed, O Agni, these thy ancient hymns; and new hymns for thee who art of old. These great libations have been made to Him who showers benefits upon us. The Sacred Fire has been kept from generation to generation." —*Hymn of Viśvâmitra.*

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THE HYMNS.

IT is not yet determined at what period the Aryas descended into the plains of India; whether moved by one impulse or in successive waves of immigration; whether impelled by disaster or desire.[1] While their religious traditions indicate a march of conquest, those of agriculture, on the other hand, as embodied in the extensive organization of the village communes, have been supposed to point with greater probability to a peaceful colonization.[2] Their earliest footprints at the base of the Himâlayas are effaced. It is even doubtful whether their name means "men of noble race" or tillers of the earth.[3] The etymology which derives it from roots (*ar*, or *ri*) that signify *movement*,[4] is at least finely suggestive of the destiny of their race. It is pleasant too to trace, however dimly, a primitive association of labor with dignity and success, and to note that the name assumed by this vigorous people for themselves served also for their gods.[5] In later times it was applicable to the Vaiśyas, or third caste, who consti-

Antiquity of the Hymns.

[1] Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 515; Müller, in *Bunsen's Philos. of History*, I. 129; Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. ii.; Ludlow's *Brit. India*, I. 37.

[2] Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, p. 176.

[3] Müller's *Science of Language*, I. 238; Lassen, I. 5; Pictet, I. 28; Weber, *Indische Studien*, I. 352. Schoebel considers it the title of the family chiefs, or patriarchs.

[4] Pictet, I. 29. See the *Lexicons* of Roth and Burnouf.

[5] *Rig Veda*, V. 2, 6; II. 11, 19.

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tuted the mass of the community.[1] Dates are uncertain in this remote antiquity. There are signs that, as early as twelve centuries before our era, the Aryas were not only a powerful people spread along the banks of the Indus, making obstinate resistance with trained elephants to the Assyrian invaders, but had even reached the mouths of the Ganges on the extreme east of India.[2] The whole intermediate country lies before us in the half-light of a heroic age, the scene of epic and doubtless historic wars, of tribe with tribe and dynasty with dynasty.

But we have a record more precious than many precise facts and dates. We have the sacred song (Veda, or *wisdom*[3]) of these otherwise silent generations. The Rig Veda, oldest of the four Hindu Bibles, — the other three are mainly its liturgical development,[4] — is a collection of about a thousand Hymns ("Mantras," *born of mind*) composed by different Rishis, or *seers* — not one of which can have originated later than twenty-six hundred, and few of them later than three thousand years ago. These initial syllables of Hindu faith are probably the devotions of still earlier times.[5] They appear to have been composed in that part of north-western India now called the Panjâb, whose wide slopes descend seaward between the upper Indus and the Jumna; a land always famous for the spirit and grace of its free

[1] St. Martin, *Géographie du Veda*, p. 84; Müller, *ut supra*.

[2] Ktesias: Duncker, *Gesch. d. Altertn.*, II. 18.

[3] From the root *vid*, to know; Greek, *οἶδα*; Lat., *video*; Germ., *wissen*; Eng., *wit*, *wisdom*.

[4] "The *Rig Veda*," says Manu, "is sacred to the gods: the *Yajur* relates to man; the *Sama*, to the manes of ancestors." The *Atharva* consists, mainly, of formulas for use in expiations, incantations, and other rites.

[5] Müller's *Sansk. Literat.*, 481, 572; Whitney, in *Chr. Exam.*, 1861, p. 256; Wilson's *Introd. to Rig Veda*; Duncker, II. 18; Koeppen, *Relig. d. Buddha*, I. 12; Colebrooke's *Essays*, I. 129; Lassen, I. 749.

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tribes, having its outlook on soaring mountains and limitless snow-reaches; a land of picturesque hill ranges and of redundant streams, whose rushing waters these children of Nature loved to celebrate in their sacred songs.

We possess this Rig Veda in precisely the state, down to the number of verses and syllables, in which it existed centuries before the Christian era.[1] It probably represents the earliest distinctly expressed phase of religious sentiment known to history.[2] There is not the slightest sign of a knowledge of writing in the whole collection.[3] In all ancient literature, there is no parallel to this inviolable transmission of "sacred text," and the veneration with which men are wont to regard such protection from the vicissitudes of time may be more justly claimed for this the *oldest* of Bibles, than for any other in the world.

And the respect deepens when we reflect that these Hymns are outcomes of a yet remoter Past; that they point us beyond themselves to marvellous creative faculty in the imagination and faith of what is otherwise wholly inaccessible, the childhood of Man. They present a language already perfected without the aid of a written alphabet;[4] a literature already preserved for ages in the religious memory alone! They sing of older hymns which the fathers sang, — of "ancient sages and elder gods." They

Pre-Vedic Religion.

[1] Müller and Whitney, *ut supra;* Colebrooke, in *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. 481; Craufurd's *Ancient and Modern India*, ch. viii.

[2] Müller, 557.

[3] Müller (497, 528) finds no sign of writing in ancient Hindu history. Whitney (*Chr. Exam.*, 1861) thinks it may have been employed, though not for higher literary purposes.

[4] The language of the Rig Veda differs in many respects from the later Sanskrit, the learned language of its commentators. "Its freedom is untrammelled by other rules than those of common usage." Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 223; Whitney, in *Journal of Amer. Oriental Society*, III. 296.

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were themselves old at the earliest epoch to which we can trace them. Their religion, like their language, was already mature when they were born. Do not seek in them the beginning of the religious sentiment, the dawning of the Idea of the Divine. Their deities are all familiar and ancestral. It is already an intimate household faith, which centuries have endeared. "This is our prayer, the old, the prayer of our fathers."[1] "Our fathers resorted to Indra of old: they discovered the hidden light and caused the dawn to rise; they who showed us the road, the earliest guides." "Now, as of old, make forward paths for the new hymn, springing from our heart." "Hear a hymn from me, a modern bard."[2] As far back as we can trace the life of man, we find the river of prayer and praise flowing as naturally as it is flowing now. We cannot find its beginning because we cannot find the beginning of the soul.

The Vedic People.

The earliest religion is one with the maturest in this respect: that it records itself in the details of life. And these primitive Hymns have been called the "historical" Veda, so real is the picture they give of the Aryas after their descent into India. They are described as a pastoral and to some extent agricultural race, divided into clans, and often engaged in wars of ambition or self-defence.[3] Their enemies, designated as Dasyus, or foes,[4] and Rakshasas, or giants,[4] are unquestionably the aborigines of Northern India, and are described as of beastly appearance,

[1] *R. V.*, III. 39, 2; I. 48, 14.

[2] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, III. 220–230.

[3] It has been suggested that the hymns contain traces of an opposition between a peaceful and a warlike element within the old Aryan community, ancestors perhaps of the priestly and soldier castes, respectively. Wheeler, *Hist. of India*, II. 439.

[4] Muir. See also Bunsen's *Philos. of History*, I. 343.

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every way abominable, and even mad. They are sometimes represented as magicians, who withhold the rain in the mountain fastnesses; and identified mythologically with darkness and drought. They are declared to be living without prayers or rites, or any religious faith; charges which go further to prove the devotion of the invaders to their own belief, than the atheism of the tribes they despised. The extreme religious sensitiveness of the Aryas is attested by the frequency with which these charges of godlessness are repeated, in the strongest terms of indignation as well as contempt; feelings which point perhaps to barbarous practices abhorrent to their own purer faith. Their social ideas indicate primitive relations and pursuits. Their political institutions very closely resembled those of the Homeric Greeks. Their names for king meant father of the house and herdsman of the tribe. Their public assemblies they called "cowpens," and war was "desire of cattle." They prayed for larger herds, for fleet horses, broader pastures, and abundant rain; for nourishing food; for valor and strength; for long life and many children; for protection against enemies and the beasts of the wild.

This infantile human nature nevertheless adored the Light. The dawn and the decline of Day, and the starlit Night that hinted in its splendors an unseen sun returning on a path behind the veil, were dear to its imagination and its faith; and Fire, in all its mysterious forms, from the spark that lighted the simple oblation, and the flame that rose from the domestic hearth, to that central orb, in which the prescience of their active instinct saw, so long ago, an all-productive cosmic energy,[1] was every-

The Worship of Light.

[1] See Hymns quoted by Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda*, ch. xv.

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where one and the same, alike mysterious, alike divine. And this vital fire of the universe was ever within call, stooping to human conditions, respondent to their need and will; at once a father and a child; born when the seeker would, out of dark wombs in herb and tree; waiting there to kindle at the touch of his hand, when he rubbed the two bits of wood, or turned the wheel of his fire-churn, — as if his busy fingers reached through the bright deeps on high, and brought life at their tips, *kindred* life, fresh from the central flame.[1] In the imagery of the hymn, they are "the ten brothers, whose work, one with the prayer, brings forth the god." The worshipper, plying them with power, "plants the eye of Surya in the sky, and disperses the delusions of darkness."[2]

Its creative and prophetic meaning.

Thus early in the history of religion the act of worship is blended with a sense of creative faculty. Man is here dimly aware of the truth that he makes and remakes his own conception of the divine; that the revealing of deity must come in the natural activity of his human powers.

This prophetic instinct thrilled within him, at each spark he drew from the splinter's cleft to kindle his altar-fire, so long before science had secularized his mastery of nature in lightning-conductor and electric jar. There was more in this delight than the mere satisfaction of physical necessities. With every upward dart of flame from the dark wood, the god was new born; a mystery of answered prayer and expanded oblation. So the omnipotence of the child's dream

[1] So the North-American tribes. Brinton (*Myths of the New World*, p. 144) quotes a Shawnee prophet as saying: "Know that the life in your body and the fire on your hearth are one, and both from the same source."

[2] *R. V.*, V. 40; X. 62.

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was the first regenerator of the heavens and the earth. The out-goings of the morning shone with the courage and strength of his inward day.[1]

Such was the religious rite of the old Vedic families. Each had its altar and its sacred Fire. The family hearth was the first "holy of holies;" and the flame kept burning in every household was the sign of perpetuity for all powers that bound men in social relations. And not for the Vedic families alone. The Romans and the Greeks also made the hearth the centre of religious faith and rite; and so the word Hestia, or Vesta (the altar), originally signifying the *fixed place* for the family hearth-flame, came to represent the divine mother, to whom all deities bent the knee with the old filial reverence for that flame, at the hearth of the world. Vesta, or womanly purity, was worshipped in the "ever-living fire," which meant the inviolability of the family, and the sacred meaning that invests its transmission of human life.[2]

In the later age of the Hindu epics, the rites of a whole people in honor of their king are still performed with the primitive instruments of these joyful oblations: not only mortar and pestle for crushing the Soma plant, but the two pieces of wood for kindling the altar fire.[3]

This original delight in producing the element

[1] Pillon (*Les Religions de l'Inde*, in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1868) traces the tyranny of the *priesthood* in later times to this Vedic faith in the power of prayer and sacrifice to bring forth and sustain the god. "It is not man, but the priest, that thus creates the divine, in those early sacrifices; and this naturally developed itself into the divinity of the Brahman." But the writer seems to forget that the priesthood, as a distinct class, was not then conceived of as masters of this simple rite. And the feeling of creative power involved in it belonged to the self-confidence of the religious sentiment, was its natural faith, its wonder at the work of its own hands. That its prestige came to be concentrated in the worship of the priest as such was due to other causes, tending to narrow and ritualize the religious life of the Hindus; to such, among others, as ecclesiastical organization, climate, and, later, passivity of temperament.

[2] Cicero, *Pro Domo*, § 41.

[3] Râmâyana, II. ch lxxxiii.

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which animates the world, and in preserving its pure and helpful forces, is retained in all religions of the Indo-European race. It is consecrated in myth and rite, and fable and spell. Its vestiges are in the legend of Prometheus, civilizer of men through this secret of power; in the Roman Vestal Fire; in the lighting of the sacred lamps in Christian churches; and in the "need-fires" to remove evil and cure disease, familiar to the Germanic tribes.[1] The races of the New World also guarded the sacred element with the same loyalty, and renewed it by the same primitive method of friction which the Aryas of the Veda employed.[2] Man could not forget that pregnant dawn of revelation, the discovery of his own power to rekindle the life of the universe.

Primitive Symbolism.

From first to last, what significance he has read in Light; as element of nature, as vision of the soul! The symbol is for ever dear. And it was *as* symbol, not as mere material element, that it had religious homage in the early ages. It is true that developed symbolism requires the separation of the thing from what it represents, and the choice of it *as* representative; and this can hardly belong to Vedic experience. But we must remember that there must be an early stage of *unconscious* symbolism, — a sense of help, beauty, power in the elements, already obscurely suggesting the intimate unity of nature with man; the condition and the germ of all later development in this direction. And this is what we find in the Veda.

From the first stages of its growth onwards, the

[1] Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-Lore*, ch. ii.

[2] Compare Brinton, p. 143; Prescott's *Peru*, I. 107; and Domenech's *Deserts of America*, II. 418.

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spirit thus weaves its own environment: nature is for ever the reflex of its life. And what but an unquenchable aspiration to truth could have made it choose Light as its first and dearest symbol, reaching out a child's hand to touch and clasp it, with the joyous cry, "This is mine, mine to create, mine to adore!"

That instinctive cry predicts not only the whole light-loving mythology of the Indo-European races, and its free play through the heavens and the earth, but the concentration of the ripest intelligence on Light in all forms and in all senses, physical, moral and spiritual. That primitive pursuit of a cosmic fire centred in the sun was indeed natural divination: it struck the path which science was ever afterward to trace through the subtle forms and processes of force, paying an ever nobler homage to solar light and heat. It is interpreted across thirty centuries by Tyndall's song of science to this centre and source of living powers.[1] That wonder and joy over the first kindling of the flame is an earnest of the rapture which has ever celebrated Light as type of spiritual resurrection. That infantile thrill at generating the "eye of Surya" is a germ of man's mature consciousness that knowledge is power. And that fearless clasp on the elemental fires predicts the full trust in Nature, which at last affirms her, against all implications of dogmatic theology, to be not the spirit's darkness, but its day.

Such prophecy was in that primal attraction to the Light. Well might its priest and poet sing at morning, his face to the rising sun: "Arise! the breath of our life has come! The darkness has fled. Light

[1] *Heat as Mode of Motion*, pp. 455–459.

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advances, pathway of the Sun! It is Dawn that brings consciousness to men: she arouses the living, each to his own work: she quickens the dead. Bright leader of pure voices, she opens all doors; makes manifest the treasures; receives the praises of men. Night and Day follow each other and efface each other, as they traverse the heavens: kindred to one another for ever. The path of the sisters is unending, commanded by the gods. Of one purpose, they strive not, they rest not; of one will, though unlike. They who first beheld the Dawn have passed away. Now it is we who behold her; and they who shall behold her in after-times are coming also. Mother of the gods, Eye of the Earth, Light of the Sacrifice, for us also shine!"[1]

Iranian and Indian.

The old Vedic deities all centre in this purest of the elements. In this, as in many other respects, their affinity with the Avesta-deities of the Iranians is so striking as to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the two races were originally one. Of this primitive unity we have already spoken.[2] A sharp discordance seems to have struck into it; and the two sections of the Aryan family, moving in different directions, are found using the same mythological names in opposite and hostile meanings. The gods of the one are the evil spirits of the other. But the antagonism touches the names only. The worship of the Light stands unchanged for both.

Unchanged in essence. Yet there was a difference in the application of this common symbol to express the inward experience. While the Iranians converted

[1] *Rig Veda*, I. 113; Muir.

[2] Lassen, I. 527, 529; Bunsen, *Philos. Hist.*, I. 130; Schoebel, *Récherches sur la Religion Première de la Race Indo-Européne*, Paris, 1868.

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the phenomena of nature into signs of moral conflict, the Indians, on the other hand, made them the divine reflex of simple social instincts and practical pursuits. We see here a happy confidence in these nearest elements of experience, rising to the form of religious trust. It is coextensive with the tasks and the desires; and there was, moreover, sufficient self-respect in this primitive sense of natural order to claim freely for human interests the sanction of an intimate relation to all vast, unfathomable forces in the Universe. So early was man, the purport of nature, at home in its mysteries. Titanic Powers have tenderly waited on the processes of his growth, and taken the significance his childish purpose craved. This lord of the manor rules it from his birth.

The Horse and the Cow, the nomad's earliest helpers and sustainers, are the earliest symbols of his poetic faith. The clouds are the "herds of the sky;" "the many-horned, moving cattle, in the lofty place, where the wide-stepping Preserver shines." "When the dawns bring rosy beams, then these ruddy cows advance in the sky." The Pastoral Symbols.

Vritra (the enveloper), or Ahi (the serpent), encamped on the mountains, withholds their bounty. Indra, as the lightning, pierces this foe with his gleaming spear, and milks the nourishers of man. Down go the drops to the sea "like kine." Ahi lies felled by the bolt, under his mother, "like a dead cow and her calf, and the floods go joyfully over him." The streams are the "herds of the earth." The summer drought is Ahi's work, who has driven them to the mountain caves, or castles, and holds them bound. Indra follows, and sets them free. His thunder is "like a cow lowing for her calf." Swift as thought,

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the winds (Maruts), "born among kine, strengthened with milk," attend him. "With their roaring they make the rocks tremble, they rend the kings of the woods; and men hear their talk to each other, as they rush on, with awe." The clouds are their "spotted deer, the lightnings their bright lances:" they are "heroes, ever young, that bring help to man." Indra smites down Vritra as "an axe fells the woods; breaks down the castles (of cloud); hollows out the rivers; splits the mountain in pieces like a shard." And therefore the singers "bring their praises to heroic Indra, as cows come home to the milker."

Ushas,[1] the morning light, is now a "maiden, like the dun heifer;" now twin youths, Aśvins,[2] on fleet steeds; now a "stately spouse, who steps forth, awakening all creatures, stirring the birds to flight, and man to his toil." Saramâ, the dawn, creeps up the sky, seeking right and left for the bright herds, whom the night has stolen, and hidden in its caves. "As mares bring up their new-born foals, so the gods bring up the rising sun." Savitri[3] is the risen sun. "Bright-haired, white-footed steeds draw him along his ancient upward and downward paths, the paths without dust, and built secure; the wise, the golded-handed, bounteous Sun." He is himself "a steed, whom the other gods follow with vigorous steps."

Agni.

Agni,[4] Fire, is the "herdsman's friend, bright in the sacrifice, and slays his foes." He is the child of the two pieces of wood rubbed together, hidden in the cleft between them; brought to birth by

[1] From *us*, to burn; Gr., ἠως; Lat., *uro*; Germ., *ost*; Eng., *east*.
[2] From *aś*, to penetrate; the *swift ones*; Gr., ὠκυς; Lat., *equus*.
[3] From *su*, to produce.
[4] From *ag*, to move; Lat., *ignis*.

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trees and shrubs, by the clouds and the waters. He is god of the hearth, "born in the house, gracious as a dwelling, bringing joy." He is the "son of power, neighing like a horse when he steps out of his strong prison, spreading over the earth in a moment when he has grasped food with his jaws, devouring the wood, surrounding his path with darkness, and sweeping his tail in the wind, as, in the smoke column, he ascends to heaven." When the lightning illumines the storm, he is the "bull, born in the bed of waters, who impregnates the herds of heaven." He is "wealth," and whatsoever means wealth to the herdsman; "like a good son, like a milch cow, like women in a dwelling;" "the light of the sun;" "the soul of what moves or rests;" a deity pervading the world, who is at once bearing gifts to the gods from man, and coming on the earth to bless him.[1]

[1] Rig Veda, *passim*. All versions of the Rig Veda Hymns now accessible to students have been carefully consulted. They are: 1. Prof. H. H. Wilson's English translation, made under the auspices of the East India Company, and extended since his death, so that it now covers more than half the original collection; and this, faithful as it is, has the twofold disadvantage of not discriminating the original text from the later commentary of Sâyana, and of being deficient in poetic appreciation and simplicity of style. 2. The French version of Langlois, which evidently errs in the opposite direction of too great liberality and poetic freedom. 3. Dr. Rosen's admirable Latin version, of the highest authority with all scholars, but unfortunately brought to a close by his early death, and covering only the greater part of the First Book. 4. Translations of a large number of Hymns, — into German, by accurate Oriental scholars like Benfey, Aufrecht, and Roth, in the German Oriental Journals; and into English by Max Müller (*Sanskrit Literature*) and by Dr. Muir, in his invaluable *Sanskrit Texts*. 5. Müller's long-desired English version, of which only the first volume has appeared. The quotations in the present work have been made with preference of Benfey and Rosen to Wilson, where the three cover the same ground, and give different renderings of the text. A less scrupulous regard to accuracy would have greatly enlarged, and in the view, perhaps, of many readers, greatly improved this account of the Rig Veda, by a fulness of quotation, which, however tempting, the present state of scholarship on the subject does not, in my judgment, warrant. I have, in general, often with no little sacrifice of taste and inclination, avoided quoting texts for which there is but one authority; except such as are furnished by Müller and Muir, whose versions have, in general, been adduced without hesitation. Quotations from the Vedas, in popular works upon ancient religions, must be received with great caution, being often drawn, without investigation, from very imperfect versions. No one, at all acquainted with the materials now on our hands, would quote the best version of a Rig Veda Hymn with the same assurance of minute accuracy with which he adduces translations from the

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These and other deities are, with simple confidence, invited to descend and recline on the sacred Kusa grass, and quaff the juice of a mountain plant,[1] expressed in a mortar or between stones, strained through a goat's hair sieve into clarified butter, and sprinkled on the grass. Exhilarated by this draught of vital juices, they are nerved to supreme labors in behalf of their worshippers. Perhaps the mingling of these elements symbolized the propagation of life in man and beast, to these primitive tribes doubtless the holiest mystery and the dearest hope. And this beverage, though a mild acid of no great potency, was thought helpful to the lyrical powers of the psalmists themselves. "Soma, like the sea, has poured forth thoughts and hymns and songs."[2]

Soma.

But the language of the Hymns to Soma shows that its virtue was associated with the idea of new and purer life, given through voluntary sacrifice. The sap of the mountain plant, slain and brayed in the mortar, became the "all-purifier, all-generator; father of the gods;" "its ocean transcends the worlds," and its filter is their "support."[3] Both Soma (Hindu) and Haoma (Persian) are "healers, deliverers from pain." The Sâma Veda says of this god, that he "submits to mortal birth, and is bruised and afflicted that others may be saved."[4] This is the rudest type of mediation through sacrifice, of strength through weakness, of life through death. A later hymn has been thought to represent the Supreme Spirit as sacrificing himself, to create the world.[5]

Greek or Latin classics. Yet the path through this difficult literature is already so well cleared that we need not misconceive its bearings on any important question of Comparative Religion.

[1] The *Asclepias acida*. [2] *R. V.*, IX. 96.

[3] See texts in Muir, vol. iv. Soma means "*extract*,"—from *su*, to express or beget.

[4] Stevenson's Transl. Pt. II., x. 2, 6; vi. 4. [5] *R. V.*, X. 81. But see Muir, vol. iv.

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Here surely is what religion and philosophy have been wont to call "man in bonds of nature;" man rudimentary, instinctive, absorbed in material objects, "unaided by revelation," dependent on what comes in the "mere" structure and necessity of his faculties. This is that "natural incapacity," which is believed to require "supernatural grafting" in order to the generation of spiritual truth. And yet what do we find here? The religious sentiment intensely active, indeed an all-pervading consciousness. These Hymns are full of implicit trust, of childlike awe. They are addressed to deities, not arbitrarily fashioned in human shape, nor out of any material of human device, nor yet enclosed in temples made by hands; but felt directly by the religious instinct, face to face with nature. It was not a sense so much of diverse deities, as of dependence and divine guardianship, and even of a closer relation. Prayers were espousals with deity, and the very car itself by which the blessing descended. They even "uphold the sky." He who asked devoutly, received. No god could resist constancy in one's prayer. Whatsoever he needed, prayer would bring, — food, healing, riches, victory, knowledge, daily protection. Strong in the force and promise of nature, the instinct knows no distrust of itself or its object.[1] "My prayers fly to Him who is seen of many, as herds to their pasture;" "fly upwards, to win highest good, as birds to their nest."[2] "Indra, preserver, refuge, leave us not subject to the evil disposed; let not the secret guilt of men harm us; be with us when afar, be with us when nigh; so supported, we shall not fear. We have no other friend but thee, no other happiness, no other

Spirituality.

[1] *R. V.*, V. 44, 8. [2] Ibid., I. 25, 16, 4.

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father. There is none like thee, in heaven or earth, O mighty One. Give us understanding, as a father his sons: let not the wicked tread us down. Thine we are, we who go on our way upheld by thee." "Thou whose ears hear all things, keep near thee this my hymn."[1] "Free from harm, we praise bounteous Vishnu who harmeth none. Listen, O self-moved Deep, to our early hymn."[2]

"Agni, guardian of the dwelling, observer of truth, remover of diseases, ever-watchful, and provident for us, life-giver."[3] "As everlasting beams dwell in the Sun, so all treasures are in thee, their king." "Men find thee who sing the words made in their hearts."[4] "Day after day we approach thee with reverence: take us into thy protection, as a father his son: be ever present for our good." "Break not the covenant with our fathers. Decay threatens the body like a cloud. From this ill be my guardian." "Thou art like a trough of water in the desert to the man who longs for thee."[5] "O Agni, in thy friendship I am at home."[6]

The wise Pushan (food-giver) is invoked to continue the protecting care he bestowed on the men of old. — The divine Rivers,[7] that refresh the herds with their healing streams, are invoked to grant length of life. — The Aśvins are invoked in the last watches of night, as doers of all noble and generous deeds, to break forth in the dawn with their wonder-works of restora-

[1] *R. V.*, I. 11, 2; II. 32, 2; VII. 32; I. 10, 9.
[2] Ibid., VIII. 25.
[3] Ibid., I. 12.
[4] Ibid., I. 59, 3; I. 60, 3.
[5] Ibid., I. 1, 7, 9; I. 71, 10; X. 4, 1.
[6] Ibid., V. 44, 14 (Müller).
[7] Of the richly watered Panjâb they might well have been the gods. In the Veda their flowing speeds onward the hymn and rite. More than thirty streams are mentioned in a single hymn. "O Sindh, the rivers bring their tributes to thee, as cows their milk to the milker; thou movest, like a king extending his wings for battle, at the head of thy tempestuous waves."

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tion on the sick, the lame, the blind. — Parjanya, rain-giver, is invoked to "cry aloud, to thunder, to flood the earth and impregnate it, that all that is therein may rejoice and be glad."—The love of Vishnu, "the Preserver,"[1] "embraces all mankind," an "unpreoccupied love."[2]

"May the opening dawns, the swelling streams, the firm-set hills, the ancestors present at this invocation, preserve us! May we at all seasons be of sound mind; may we ever behold the rising sun." "Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, lengthener of life, giver of food and wealth. Drive far away the unfriendly: make our pastures wide, give us safety. All ye divine Ones, protect us always."[2]

These are not the prayers of slaves, nor even of mere suppliants. They incessantly break forth into praises. "O Indra, gladden me! Sharpen my thought like a knife's edge; whatever I, longing for thee, now utter, do thou accept."[3] A poetic enthusiasm glows in these earliest matins and nocturns. They exalt the splendors of the Dawn and the orderly paths of the Night. They dwell with joyful wonder on the changes which pass over the sky and the earth, tracing step by step the marvellous beneficence that follows the paths of the Light. All this is not mere "meteorolatry." Man is not prostrate here before the material universe, but erect, greeting the sublimity and magnificence of nature as tokens of a divine good-will. The sense of physical dependence is constantly more or less absorbed in the delight of this recognition. It would be doing great injustice to primitive Aryan piety to overlook this fine freedom of

[1] From *viś*, to hold, or maintain.
[2] *R. V.*, I. 42, 5; 23, 18; 112; V. 83; VII. 100; VI. 52, 4, 5; VII. 77.
[3] Ibid., VI. 47, 10.

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the imagination, this exultation in the beauty as well as the bounty of the visible world, and the proof it affords that we have here something quite other than adoration of visible things. It is the happy sense of harmony with the universe, a healthful confidence that the world and man are made for each other, that life and nature mean his good. "Surya has produced the heavens and earth, beneficent to all: from the desire to benefit men, he has measured out the worlds, with their undecaying supports. To Him we render praises."[1]

Spontaneity of Song.

The rishis were "associates of the gods; found out the hidden light, and brought forth the dawn with sincere hymns."[2] The singers "seek out the thousand-branched mystery, through the vision of their hearts."[3] Their hymns are "of kin to the god, and attract his heart;"[4] for "Agni is himself a poet."[5] The "thoughtful gods produce these hymns."[6] The rishis "prepare the hymn with the heart, the mind, and the understanding."[7] They "fashion it as a skilful workman a car;" "adorn it as a beautiful garment, as a bride for her husband."[8] They "generate it from the soul as rain is born from a cloud;" "send it forth from the soul, as wind drives the cloud;" "launch it with praises, as a ship on the sea."[9]

Delight in the World.

These rude bards have not analyzed their consciousness: the material and the spiritual are still blended together in their conceptions. This is not the anthropomorphism which we find in the maturer faith of the Greek, a clear full disengagement

[1] *R. V.*, I. 160. [2] Ibid., VII. 76, 4. [3] Ibid., VII. 33, 9.
[4] Ibid., VIII. 12, 31; 13, 36. [5] Ibid., VI. 14, 2. [6] Ibid., X. 61, 7.
[7] Ibid., I. 61, 2. [8] Ibid., I. 130, 6; V. 29, 15; X. 39, 14.
[9] Ibid., VII. 94; I. 116; X. 116. See Muir, III. 220–240.

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of the personal deity from the physical element or form in which he is felt to be present. For wonder and awe are not analyzers nor definers of thought: the lines between infinite and finite, man and nature, spirit and matter, are not of their drawing. But neither is this Vedic worship the mere "personification of the elements," the mere calling the thing fire, or cloud, or moon-plant, a god. What we do in fact note here, in the not yet differentiated instinct, is a predominance of the spiritual element; and this not only in its constant recognition of intelligence as everywhere the substance of nature, and in its admiration of conscious energies and volitions, — mantra, the prayer, itself meaning thought, — but even more decisively in that open sense of beauty and hospitality, of invitation even, in life and the world to which I have just referred; a prelude, we may call it, to the æsthetic grace and geniality of the Greek.[1] It is indeed what Quinet finely declares to be the meaning of the whole Vedic religion, — "Revelation by Light."

It is not the mere worship of the elements. Bondage to the senses will not explain this spontaneity and joy; these cordial relations with the universe; this home-feeling so assured and fearless as to permit undistracted contemplation and living praise; this creative force of imagination; this feeling of beauty and

[1] Very close affinities, not only etymological, but profoundly psychological and moral also, have been traced between the three principal divinities of the Greeks, — Zeus, Dionysus, and Heracles, — on the one hand, and the three Vedic gods, — Indra, Agni, and Savitri, — on the other. The relations between the gods of the Veda and those of Greece and Rome, and the close affinities of name and function, pointing to a common origin, are matters of literary inquiry which lie outside the direct line of our purpose. They will be found fully treated in the writings of Müller; in Lassen's *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 756; and in Mr. Cox's new volumes on *Aryan Mythology* (1870). Also by Néve, *Mythe des Ribhavas;* and Pococke, *India in Greece.*

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benignity, in full play, neither repressed by fear, nor enslaved by animal instincts. It is very refreshing to see the religious sentiment recognizing the æsthetic faculty, the guarantee of all liberties, and pronouncing it good, in the morning of time. It was a great step in the evolution of intellectual life. We cannot be inattentive to such an assertion of inherent capacities and rights of the soul.

It shows us in the infancy of Indo-European development that innate disposition to accord liberty to every faculty, welcoming all to their own several uses and delights, and accepting the world as their natural furtherance and plastic material, which has given this ethnic family the leadership of intellectual progress and religious freedom. The Vedic Hymn is the primal guarantee, the infantile presage of these future powers. The oldest Greek sages, like the Vedic, wrote their wisdom under poetic inspiration and in verse. Solon, Thales, and the rest, were called *Sophoi*, or knowers; a word having nearly the same meaning with the word "rishis." Their cosmogonies, which trace all things to fire, or water, or their intermixture, are, like the Vedic faith, no mere element-worship, and clearly indicate the recognition of life and mind as the essence of these outward forms. This is the characteristic of all early Aryan thought.

All Religions in germ.

It is the mind of a child that we are exploring. All is yet indeterminate, vague, instinctive. But for that very reason we can the better recognize the capacities of human nature, observing the primitive impulses from which its laws of growth have evolved such diverse forms of revelation as the history of religion presents. The Veda cannot be claimed exclusively by any one of the great theological

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systems, — by monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism; but it contains the common principle of them all, the germ, of which the highest is but a natural development, — the consciousness of deity.[1]

This nebulous universality of the Rig Veda, this potentiality of all religions, this prophetic star-dust of historic systems, may well enough be called pantheism. Yet in no exclusive sense. It is not philosophical abstraction, but intense realization: it is man wide awake and intent, in eye and ear, and to the very finger-tips. It is the rounding continent of his religious instincts, and holds a wealth of imagination that supplies prototypes for the mythologies of India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany; and a geniality in its love of personification, that endowed with living sympathies each and every phase of the elements, every metamorphosis of fire, and the very sacrifices and prayers of the worshippers themselves.[2]

Its polytheism, like its pantheism, is in the free, plastic stage, and clearly discloses its dependence on a theistic instinct, deeper than itself, in the constitution of man. Intuition of the One.

I do not intend to convey the idea of what Müller calls a "monotheism which *precedes* the polytheism of the Veda; a remembrance of One God, breaking through the mists of idolatrous phraseology."[3] Such antecedent revelation does not appear to me to be

[1] There is, also, a hint of dualism in the fact that twin deities are often invoked, yet not as antagonistic. Müller, *Science of Language*, II. 585. There is even a tendency to triple forms of deity, pointing to later conceptions of a trinity.

[2] For an excellent *résumé* of Vedic worship, as regards the illustration of its vigor and wealth of imagination, and its affinities with other religions, see Alfred Maury's *Croyances et Légendes de l'Antiquité*. On the personification of *Soma*, the sacrifice, see Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv., and Stevenson's *Sâma Veda*. Mr. Fiske's articles on Mythology, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, trace many of these relations.

[3] *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 559.

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proved. But that a profound theistic instinct, the intuition of a divine and living whole, is involved in the primitive mental processes we are here studying, I hold to be beyond all question.

For these Hymns are in reality not so much the worship of many deities, as the recognition of deity everywhere; the upward look of reverence, wonder, gratitude, and trust, from hearts to which all aspects and powers of nature spoke in essentially the same language. There is manifold revelation; but there is also unity of impression. The response to these divine invitations takes outwardly different directions, is addressed to different objects; but intrinsically it is seeking the same spirit in all. In no other way can we explain the fact that these Vedic deities are in no essential respect distinguishable from each other. It is not merely that they are mostly forms of light or fire: this recognition of unity in the symbol points back to the intuition of a deeper spiritual and moral oneness.[1] They are all described in the same way. All are truthful, beneficent, generous, omniscient, omnipotent. All are bestowers of life, inspirers of knowledge. They are alike the refuge of men, alike immortal; creators and measurers of the world, for the benefit of man; radiant with all-searching light, transcending and pervading all worlds. "Among you, O gods, there is none that is small, none that is young: you are all great indeed." They have all equal praise. All are invoked for the same blessings. They are even mutually interchangeable. "Thou, Agni, art Indra, art

[1] Even where an opposition of interests is for a moment conceived, as where Indra is supposed to contend with the Maruts about their respective rights, this is but in order to reassert the unity of divine interests more positively. "The Maruts, O Indra, are thy brethren." *R. V.*, I. 170, 2. See Roth's translation of I. 165, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXIV p. 302.

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Vishnu, art Brahmanaspati." "Thou, Agni, art born Varuna; becomest Mitra when kindled: in thee, son of strength, are all the gods." And all alike are supreme. Soma, the sacrificial plant, itself "generates all the gods, and upholds the worlds."[1] The fact now before us has been admirably stated by Müller. "Each god is to the mind of the suppliant as good as all the gods. He is felt at the time as supreme and absolute, in spite of the necessary limitations which to our minds a plurality of gods must entail on every single god."[2] And the reason of this can only be that, in all these diverse directions, the *act of worship* was essentially one and the same, and gave its own boundless meaning to all its instruments, forms, and objects. A like assignment of equal and supreme authority to many different deities is found also in Egyptian polytheism; and the trait has in this case been admitted to indicate an approximation to belief in the Unity of God, even by those who can find no other evidence of the theistic bearings of that primeval faith.[3] The same fact has been noted in respect to the names applied to their deities by the North American tribes, such as, "Maker of all," "Father and Mother of Life," "One perfect God," "endless," "omnipotent," "invisible," and the like; all of which, according to the latest and best researches on the myths of the New World, were familiar terms of homage for what was felt to be higher than man, and clearly indicate a "monotheism which is ever present, not in con-

[1] *R. V.*, VII. 30, 1; II. 1, 3; V. 3, 1; IX. 86, 89, 109.

[2] *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 532. Müller's fine spiritual instinct and profound acquaintance with the original text of the Vedas combine to make him, on the whole, our best authority for their verbal meaning.

[3] Kenrick's *Ancient Egypt*, I. 367.

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trast to polytheism, but in living intuition, in the religious sentiments."[1]

It is impossible not to discern in the Vedic passages which have been quoted, and indeed in Vedic forms of worship generally, the presentiment of that profound unity into which the wisest pupils of ancient polytheism resolved the gods of their fathers, and which Maximus Tyrius expresses in terms that strikingly recall our Vedic texts. "Men make distinctions between the gods. They are not aware that all the gods have one law, one life, the same ways, not diverse nor mutually hostile; all rule; all are of the same age; all pursue our good; all have the same dignity and authority; all are immortal; one their nature, under many names."[2] And as the Greek philosopher, so also the Vedic seer was conscious of a still deeper unity than this.

Mystical sense of unity.

In these vague embodiments of religious wonder and awe, there could be none of that distinctness of individuality which later and more reflective polytheism gave to its separate deities. Doubtless many Vedic terms translated as proper names were really meant as *appellatives* only, or else record natural facts which were not intended to be personified at all, so that our ignorance of their meaning may have greatly multiplied the distinct figures of this older Olympus, as well as exaggerated their distinctness. Müller has called attention to a striking difference between the Semitic and Aryan *languages*, in the tendency to *invite* polytheistic distinctions. In the former, the original root-name always remains unaltered in the body of any word

[1] Brinton, p. 58.

[2] *Diss.*, XXXIX. 5.

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that may be formed from it; while in the latter it is merged and lost in each fresh combination, so that every new appellative tends to independent meaning, and starts a special personality. That these linguistic peculiarities explain the intenser monotheism of the one race, and the freer polytheism of the other, seems, however, to be less conceivable than that both the linguistic and the religious differences arise from a common cause in the constitutional unlikeness of the two races. Yet the influence of the transforming process alluded to must have been very great. And we can infer, even from the Veda, how this multiplication of individual deities must have gone on in the Aryan religions, by the change of mere appellatives into personal forms of deity. Thus a great many names to which prayers are addressed are simply expressions of qualities that were, undoubtedly, first attributed to the Sun, and became distinctive through the linguistic obscuration described above; until Macrobius could find ready to hand quite ample materials for proving his great thesis, so often reproduced, that all ancient worship was resolvable into heliolatry alone.

But at so early a stage in the observation of nature as that of the Vedas, even this process could hardly have had time to produce very clearly marked distinctions of personality in the objects of worship.

Those mysterious forms and processes of Light, to which diverse names were attached, really flowed into one another; sometimes by imperceptible gradations, sometimes by instantaneous shift, as of feeling or mood. Whether the face of the universe changed before the eyes of the worshipper, or showed behind the change an ever-abiding heaven and earth, it was

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still the same face of the universe, and power could not be definitely held apart from power. The sentiment of worship, too, was ever the same, whithersoever it turned for the moment, to every name going forth in the same yearning and faith. It was natural that in every moment of deeper thought the poet should pronounce these names interchangeably. It was not their individuality that impressed him, but the common fact of their power. He would instinctively feel that unity which these experiences suggested. It was the perpetual need to find for every act of prayer and praise the *highest possible object* of prayer and praise, which caused him perpetually to regard that deity as supreme to whom he was for the moment addressing his thought. *This is the very germinal principle of Theism; for it is the instinct of undivided homage.* And if this claim to hold communion in every act of worship with the highest sovereignty nevertheless allows *many* different powers successively to appear *as* highest, if it does not yet draw the logical inference that the object of such aspiration can only be unity, it is simply because the mind is not yet introversive enough to recognize what is really involved in this spiritual process. It can require no aid from "supernatural intervention," whatever that may mean, to advance to the perception that supreme sovereignty *cannot* be divided among many. *Given the impulse to rise in every act of worship to the highest known conception of the Divine*, there can be need only of a deeper absorption in some one tribal deity, as with the Hebrew prophet, or a finer speculative habit, as with the Greek philosopher, to develop it into a clear and positive form of Theism.

It was not requisite that some special race should

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be "supernaturally" gifted with the vision, and "intrusted with the charge" of this indefeasible truth, that Deity is One. It was requisite only that the religious consciousness of man should become intently concentrated upon its own deeps. Greek, Roman, and Oriental literature, as well as Hebrew, show that this was the experience of all thoughtful minds long before the Christian era.

The whole Veda hovers on the verge of this higher experience. Its free devotion, guided like the wild fowl's flight by the mysterious instinct of natural desire, steeps unwearied wings from time to time in this purer light. There are hints of a Father of all the gods, in Dyaushpitar;[1] of a Lord of Creation, Prajâpati; of a generator and lord of all Prayer, Brahmanaspati.[2] Viśvakarman is "wise and pervading, creator, disposer, father, highest object of vision."[3] Varuna is "King of all, both gods and men."[4] Surya is the concentration of all powers in one; "the wonderful host of rays," the "eye of Mitra, Varuna, Agni;" "soul of all that moves or rests."[5] "Indra contains all the gods, as the felloe of a wheel surrounds the spokes."[6]

Even so is this whole religion contained in the adoration of Light; in the sense of a vital fire in the Universe, one with the life that stirred within the soul; in the search for this through all disguises, and the recognition of it in all visible powers. The *Gâyatri*, or holiest verse of the Veda, reads: "We meditate on that desirable light of the divine Savitri, the Sun who governs our holy rites."[7] It was this verse which the

[1] Ζεὺς πατὴρ, Jupiter. [2] *R. V.*, I. 40, 5; II. 23, 1; 24, 5; 25, 5.
[3] Ibid., X. 82, 1. [4] Ibid., II. 27, 10. [5] Ibid., I. 115, 1.
[6] Ibid., I. 32, 15. [7] Ibid., III. 62, 10.

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later worship affirmed to have been milked out by Brahma as the substance of the Veda, and "to contain all the gods," being interpreted with the largest freedom of spiritual meaning.

The Veda goes beyond these vague intimations. It distinctly announces the unity of the religious sentiment, and anticipates philosophy in referring monotheism and polytheism to a common root. "That which is One the wise call many ways. They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, the winged heavenly Garutmat."[1]

In the light of this mystical instinct, which to a greater or less extent pervades every Vedic Hymn, we must interpret the fact that all these, so-called, nature-gods are freely declared creators of the world. It even concentrates the whole of this transcendence within each in turn with such intensity and fulness as makes the personality of the Vedic God as vivid and absolute as that of the Hebrew. There are abundant passages descriptive of the all-creative and all-mastering energy of Indra, in which it seems as if we were listening to the praise of Jehovah from a Hebrew Psalmist. Nor is the spirituality of deity much more obscured by outward and sensuous imagery in the one case than in the other.

"To Indra the heavens and earth bow down. With his thunderbolt he looses the waters. At his might the mountains are afraid. He established the quivering earth; he propped up the sky for the good of all creatures, upholding the sky with its golden lights in void space; he spread also the green earth. Let us

[1] *R. V.*, I. 164, 46. There are similar hymns to Osiris, in which he is identified with other Egyptian deities. — *Rev Archéologique*, 1857. The *Book of the Dead* gives him a hundred appellations. So the Greek Zeus absorbed almost every name dear to popular faith. See Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, I. 555.

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worship him with reverence, the exalted, the undecaying, the ever young. The worlds have not measured his greatness. Many his excellent works: not all the gods can frustrate the counsels of Him who established the heavens and the earth, and produced the sun and the dawn. He transcends the whole universe; architect of all things and lord of all."[1]

Yet even of this Supreme Aryan Jehovah it is said elsewhere that "a divine and gracious mother bore him, when like the dawn he filled the worlds."[2] And he is not only undecaying, and adored of old, but "for ever young." Birth and parentage of deity.

And when the poets turn to Savitri, or to Soma, or to Agni, there is not only the same vividness in the description of sovereign power, but the same recurrence to this limiting fact of birth and beginning. How shall this be explained?

It is to be remembered that, after all, the Vedic Hymns belong to different epochs, and must represent many changes in the special ideal associated with each of the gods; and that every fresh form would naturally be held the offspring of the last. Doubtless, too, these images of birth and youth in part refer to natural transitions or phases of the heavenly bodies, the visible symbols of deity; and report the ever-fresh productive vigor of their outgoings and renewals. They are indeed the natural play of the poetic faculty, which recognizes the life of the universe as for ever new, and creation as an instant fact,—long before science learns to find the same significance in natural laws.

But the root of the idea that the gods are subject to birth and parentage probably lies deeper. While the

[1] Other examples may be found in Maury, *Légendes et Croyances*, from Langlois. See texts in Muir, vol. iv.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 134, 1. *Sâma*, Pt. II. vii. 16.

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religious imagination was busied with bringing out the sense of deity in ever-changing forms, there was naturally as constant a sense of the limitations in which these definite deities were involved. None of them could satisfy the thirst to reach the origin of power. These creators are but outbirths of what went before. They are "young;" and the ancient deep is behind them. The eye still pierces, the soul presses, beyond them, and finds no end to the series. "A divine mother bore them." What is this but to say, "God is, after all, beyond all our gods"?

Is science any wiser than song? In protoplasm, or elsewhere, has it ever found us a beginning? What else does the Vedic faith in birth and parentage of deity, but foreshadow this endless inadequacy, and in the tenderest way? It finds rest by resolving its series of divine powers into syllables of a word whose meaning for the heart was not to be fathomed, a life which only the sacred name of motherhood could express.

The depth of Deity.

This unfathomed background of life, out of which each and every god was born, must have haunted the religious consciousness as a constant suggestion of *unity* beyond all these changing forms. But it was a unity, which so far from insisting on being represented in one way only, inspired men with the intensest desire to multiply forms and symbols of it. And this diversity, bearing witness of its productive resources, must have prompted it, in turn, to seek ever more and more stars in this all-enfolding depth of spiritual space, which shut no doors of dogma, and spread no mythic firmament to stay the wings of thought. The religious imagination was not only left free, but invited to incessant creation of mythical names and forms, ever

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promising to embody more and more fully the unmortgaged ideal that welcomed them all. Here was an open path for progress, so far as progress depends on religious forces. This made the old Aryan mythologies so rich and full. It was in this way that polytheism, free from the exclusiveness that besets strictly monotheistic conceptions, became the real parent of æsthetic and scientific liberty.

Recognition of the Infinite.

It is to be observed that all these definite conceptions of deity are interfused with a sense of man's *harmonious relation to what lies beyond all conception*.[1] And of the spiritual content and confidence hereby made possible, we may cite in illustration, first, a hymn to Hiranyagarbha, or the Light as embryo, born in the waters.

1. "In the beginning there arose the source of golden light. He was the only born Lord of all that is. He established the earth and the sky. Who is the God[2] to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

2 "He who gives life; he who gives strength; whose blessing all the bright gods desire; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death. Who is the God, &c.?

3. "He who through his power is the only King of this breathing and awakening world; he who governs man and beast. Who, &c.?

4. "He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm; who measured out the light in the air. Who is, &c.?

5. "He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up, trembling inwardly. He over whom the rising sun shines forth. Who is, &c.?

6. "Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the only life of the bright gods. Who is, &c.?

7. "He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice. He who is God above all gods. Who is, &c.?

[1] I do not here employ the term "unknowable," which, as used in scientific parlance, does not convey my meaning.

[2] Langlois translates it, "To what other god."

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8. "May he not destroy[1] us. He the Creator of the earth, the righteous, who created the heavens. He who also created the bright and mighty waters. Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?"[2]

Who is this that is "born in the waters," an "embryo of light"? Even He of whom the waters and the light are but the garment, "the only life of all these bright gods;" their *life*, not apart from them only, but *in* them.[3]

And here is a farther venture into those abysses of the consciousness, where finite so blends with infinite, that its very darkness deepens into light; where deity, felt as mystery beyond all names or forms of conception, yet is also highest personality and instant life of all.

1. "There was then neither nonentity nor entity; neither atmosphere nor sky beyond. What covered all?

2. "Death was not, nor therefore immortality; nor day nor night. That One breathed, breathless, by Itself [in essence]: there was [or has been] nothing different from It, nor beyond It.

3. "The covered germ burst forth by mental heat.

4. "Then first came Love upon it, the spring of mind. This the poets in their hearts discerned, the bond between being and nought.

5. "The ray which shot across these, was it above or below? There were mighty productive powers, nature beneath and energy above.

6. "Who can declare whence this creation? The gods came later.

7. "Who then knows what its source, or whether created or not? He who rules it in highest heaven knows, or He knows not."[4]

And in the following passages we mark the pro-

[1] "Injure," according to Muir.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 121. Müller's transl. is in *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 569. Muir's, in *Sansk. Texts*, vol. iv., is essentially the same.

[3] Of the monotheism of the Hindus, recurring at every stage of their history, and its independence of foreign influences, see Lassen, II. 1105.

[4] *R. V.*, X. 129, translated by Müller and Muir. Colebrooke translates the last clause, "none other can know."

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found yearning to transcend that imperfect solution of the mystery of existence which ascribes it to a special creative fiat: — Beyond creative power.

"That which is beyond the earth and sky, beyond gods and spirits; what earliest embryo did the waters hold, in which all the gods were assembled? Ye know not Him who produced these things. Something else is within you. The chanters of hymns go about enveloped in mist, and unsatisfied with idle talk.[1]

"Who has seen the First Born? Where was the life, the blood, the soul of the world? Who went to ask it of any that knew it.[2]

"What the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth? Wise men, ask indeed, in your minds, on what He stood when He held the worlds."[3]

It is the inadequacy of all conceptions of Original Cause as a definite form of existence that one of these poets would express when he says, "The existent sprang from that which exists not."[4]

There is but one solution of these mysteries, and that is for all time: the unity of human and divine through the moral being.

Every one of these Vedic deities is a moral guardian and saviour. "This day, ye gods, with the rising sun, deliver us from sin." "Whatever sin we may have committed, O Indra, let us obtain the safe light of day: let not the long darkness come upon us." "Preserve us, O Agni, by knowledge, from sin; and lift us up, for our work and for our life." "Thou leadest the man who has followed wrong paths to acts of wisdom." "Deliver us from evil" is the constantly recurring prayer.[5] The moral element in Vedic worship.

"The gods are not to be trifled with." "They are with the righteous: they know man in their hearts."

[1] *R. V.*, X. 82. [2] Ibid., I. 164, 4. [3] Ibid., X. 81, 4. [4] Ibid., X. 72, 2.
[5] Ibid., I. 115, 6; II. 27, 14; I. 36, 14; I. 35.

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"They behold all things, and hear no prayers of the wicked." "May I, free from sin, propitiate Rudra, so as to attain his felicity, as one distressed by heat finds relief in the shade!" "I have committed many faults, which do ye, O gods, correct, as a father his ill-behaving son. Far from me be bonds, far be sins." "May our sins be removed," or "repented of" is the burden of a whole hymn.[1] What rude tribes, unused to self-examination, may have meant by the terms here translated "sinning" and "repenting," may not be easy fully to determine. We may readily overestimate their moral aspirations. But we shall err even more seriously if we recognize in their hymns nothing better than the desire to buy material advantages from their deities, or the fear of losing these advantages, or of suffering outward penalties at their hands.[2] It is very clearly a sense of wrong-doing from which the worshipper is seeking relief. It is conscience that pricks him, the rebuke of his moral ideal. Because the evil he thinks or does offends himself, *therefore* he holds it an offence to the All-discerning. Its penalties, whether inward distress or outward failure and loss, — and both kinds, as will hereafter be noticed, are confessed, — he construes as signs of its opposition to a rectitude to which he aspires. It is purity of heart, it is peace with the conscience, that these prayers pursue. Their simple confessions of weakness and ignorance are laden with earnest feeling. "I do not recognize if I am like this: I go on perplexed in mind."[3] "O Agni, thou art like a trough in the desert, to one who longs for thee."[4]

[1] *R. V.*, VII. 32. 9; VIII. 13, 15; II. 33, 6; II. 24, 5; I. 97.

[2] For this kind of criticism, see Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, I. 182, and even Wilson's *Lectures at Oxford* (1840), p. 9, 10.

[3] *R. V.*, I. 164, 37.

[4] Ibid., X. 4, 1.

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The moral law is eminently embodied in Varuna. His name, kindred with the Greek *Ouranos* and the Zend *Varena* — from *var*, to veil or surround — remands us to the outermost confines of the universe.[1] He is essentially the Limit, which enfolds the thought of these simple natures, and protects it from being bewildered and oppressed by the mysteries of immensity. He is the measurer of depths, whose wise ordinances round them in. His world is farthest space. His calm unswerving legislation is the safety of all beings and forms.[2] His worship expresses man's instinctive sense of natural law, of the bands that cannot be loosed. He is adored as framer and sustainer of the everlasting order of the world; who appointed the broad paths of the sun, prepared from of old, free from dust, well-placed in the firmament; who holds the stars from wandering, and keeps the streams from overfilling the sea. "The constellations, visible by night, which go elsewhere by day, are his inviolable works." "Wise and mighty are his deeds who has stemmed asunder the wide firmaments. He lifted on high the bright heavens: He stretched apart the starry sky and the earth, and made great channels for the days."[3] He is calm and immovable, the Aryan Fate: inevitable things are "his bonds."[4] Night, with its mysterious deeps and steadfast orderly watches, is his special realm; and he it is who brings back the sun to his place, to reappear after passing invisibly through the heavens. Thus the world was instinctively felt to be stanch with orderly cycles, long before the conception of law could be fully formed.

Varuna; the moral limit.

[1] Lassen, I. 758.

[2] *R. V.*, VIII. 42.

[3] Ibid., V. 85; VII. 86, 87: I. 24, 10.

[4] Roth, *Die höchsten Götter d. Arischen Völker* (*Zeitschrift d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, VI. 72).

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But in this physical order was reflected also the divine law which shone in the conscience, and proclaimed eternal decree against moral disobedience. "By day, by night, there is said one thing. The same is spoken to me by my own conscious heart."[1] This unseen Eye of the Night "beholds all that has been and all that will be done."[2] To Varuna the darkness shineth as the light. It is he who is offended at the evil-doer, who is satisfied only when the sin is put away. "Desirous of beholding thee, I ask what is my offence."[3] A later hymn from the Atharva Veda says of him, "If one stand or walk, or hide, the great Lord sees as if near; he knows what two whisper together; he is there the third. He who should flee beyond the sky would not escape Varuna. He hath counted the twinklings of the eyes of men."[4]

Deliverer from evil.

He is "merciful to the evil-doer, and takes away sin, extricating man from its bonds."[5] This morality is plainly not the bondage of an inexorable physical necessity, nor the blind fear of a wrathful judge. It has sight of a divine compassion, that spares and restores.

1. "Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

2. "If I go along, trembling, like a cloud driven by wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

3. "Through want of strength, thou Strong One, have I gone to the wrong shore. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

4. "Thirst came on the worshipper, in the midst of the waters. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

5. "Wherever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the

[1] *R. V.*, I. 24, 12. [2] Ibid., I 25, 11. [3] Ibid., VII. 86.
[4] Muir, V. p. 53; Müller, *Chips*, I. p. 41. [5] *R. V.*, VII. 87; I. 25, 21.

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heavenly host; wherever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"[1]

Similar trust in forgiving love inspires the prayers to all the Vedic gods. They are all called by the names Saviour and Father.

It has been said that "we look in vain in the Vedas for penitential psalms, or hymns commemorating the descent of spiritual benefits."[2] This is true only if we take these expressions in their Semitic meaning. In most Hebrew piety, the sentiment of moral obligation, yielding much fruit of sublimity and tenderness, is yet more or less an overbearing despotism. Its austere and jealous God tends to paralyze the worshipper's freedom with dread of having done, or of being about to do, something that trenches upon exclusive and sovereign claims. Hence an intensity of contrition, and a disposition to dwell on what is called the "malignity" of sin, amounting, in the ultimate phases to which Christian theology has developed it, to a demand for self-contempt and even self-abhorrence as the first condition of piety! Now it is certain that nothing like this will be found in the Vedic or any other religion of Aryan origin. But it is not to be inferred that such religions do not rest on moral and spiritual foundations. If they know nothing of these moral agonies, so liable to narrow and enslave the mind, they are not for this reason incapable of recognizing the inevitable penalty, and the need of divine renewal, involved in evil thinking and ignoble living.

Aryan sense of moral evil.

On the other hand, the gods are not jealous of the liberties of their worshipper. They cordially beckon him on every side, and make the world a genial

[1] *R. V.*, VII. 85. [2] Hardwick, I. 181.

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climate for all his energies. If there is danger lest this entire spontaneity should relax the authority of conscience, there is at least implied in it a guarantee of freedom and progress indispensable to conscience itself. It does not dwell mournfully and hopelessly on the past, nor on the enormity of offence; but passes readily on to greet fresh opportunity, accepting the future as still its friend. This moral elasticity and ready recovery of self-estimation, this good understanding between the conscience and a happy development of all human powers, is the needful corrective of a despotic moralism in religion and culture, which Semitic earnestness has mingled with its better gifts to the inward life of man.

The Adityas.

The Hymns to Varuna, which have suggested these remarks concerning a common criticism upon religions of non-Semitic origin, are not the only illustrations of the Vedic conscience. Varuna is one of Seven Adityas, or Everlasting Ones.[1] These are the "Children of Aditi," who is "The Unlimited, Immortal Light Beyond." Sleepless, beholding all things, far and near, evil and good, the innermost thoughts of men, — irreproachable protectors of the universe, haters of falsehood, punishers of sin, yet forgivers too, and abandoning none, they "bridge the paths to immortality, and uphold the heavens for the sake of the upright."[2] And to them the herdsman prayed that he might escape the vices that were "like pitfalls in his path;" calling on them to spread their protection over him, "as birds spread their wings over their young."[3] Of these the nearest to Varuna is Mitra, "*the Friend*."

[1] Roth, *ut supra*, *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, VI. 69; Müller's *Rig Veda*, I. *Notes*, p. 237.
[2] *R. V.*, II. 27.
[3] Ibid., VIII. 47, 2. See Muir, V. 57.

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"Neither is the right nor the left hand known to us, neither what is before nor what is behind. O givers of our homes, may I, weak and afraid, be guided by you to the light that is free from fear. Far or nigh, there can come no harm to him who is in your leading." [1]

Their spiritual meaning.

Though called "children of the light," these Immortals are not to be confounded with the heavenly bodies: they are not mere phases of the Sun, as the later Purânas have been supposed to represent them. They were conceived as the unseen support and background of his radiance. Their light was of the spirit. Their very names have moral and religious import, born of the conscience and the heart. They mean Friend, Protector, Beholder, Sympathizer, Benefactor, Giver without Prayer.[2] They preserve from the evil spirits, or druhs, that follow the sins of men." The oldest Aryan faith centres in these Shining Ones. The Adityas are, in fact, radiant witnesses that the visible heavens have always been recognized as the symbol of a Higher Light, through which the soul lies for ever open to infinite wisdom, justice, and care.

The mother of the gods.

In all ancient religion there is no name more interesting than that of Aditi, the "mother" of the Aryan gods. To maternity all deities pay reverence; and to the bosom of its infinite tenderness man must refer his whole conception of the divine. "Aditi," says Max Müller, "is the earliest name invented to express the Infinite, — the *visible* infinite. A-diti is the unbound, unbounded, one might almost say, the Absolute. It is a name for the distant East, the Dawn, — but more, *Beyond the Dawn;* and in one place the Dawn is called the 'Face of

[1] *R. V.*, II. 27, 11, 13.

[2] Roth, *ut supra.*

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Aditi.' In her cosmic order she is The Beyond, the unbounded realm beyond earth and sky." Beyond Aditi, however, was Daksha, literally "the powerful." "She, O Daksha, who is thy daughter; after her, the gods."[1] Yet Daksha is also said to be born of Aditi.[2] And here it must be noted that this phraseology of descent does not indicate chronological succession, but ideal relation; just as we may say, with equal truth, that light is the child of power, and that power is the offspring of light. Yet there can be no doubt that this reaching forth to an all-embracing Life beyond and behind special forms of deity, — an ultimate in which the two conceptions of love and power, under the symbols of male and female, are combined in the interchangeableness of Daksha and Aditi at the fountain of being, — is but a typical expression of the whole religious experience of the Vedic poets. For we find the same unlimited capacity invoked, in each and every deity, to reach out beyond itself, with a care and a power that should absorb all the rest.

The earliest apotheosis.

The study of the Rig Veda has revealed the fact that the earliest apotheosis of which we have record was a form of homage to virtue. Some of the hymns are addressed to deified men, who had attained their divinity through beneficent work.[3] They are the "dexterous, humble-minded artisans of the gods."[4] The miracles ascribed to them indicate what was then thought godlike in conduct. They had restored their parents to youth; an act typical, to the Oriental mind, of all social virtues.

[1] Müller's *Rig Veda*, I. p. 230, 237; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 10–13.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 72, 4, 5.

[3] Néve, *Mythe des Ribhavas;* Roth, *Brahma und die Brahmanen, in Zeitsch. d. Morg. Ges.*, I. 76.

[4] *R. V.*, V. 42, 12 (Wilson).

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They had made a chariot for the dawn, that daily blessings might be brought to all men. They had multiplied sacred vessels for the service of the gods. They had created, or brought back to life, cattle for the poor.[1] Their name, Ribhavas, formed from that most fruitful of Aryan roots, which indicates upward movement, points to aspiration and growth. It is closely related to the Greek Orpheus, both names symbolizing the arts of orderly and rhythmic construction; and to the German Elfen, denoting the busy, serviceable elves.[2] To these divine helpers, who seem to have been in some respects identical with the *pitris*, or ancestral fathers of families, especially in their beneficence, prayers were addressed for the same blessings which the older deities bestowed. Thus the good man ascends to heaven, and stands among the gods. The stars of the generous shine in the firmament: they partake of immortality.[3] They are like the Aśvins, those divine physicians, who enabled the lame to walk, the blind to see; who restored the aged to youth, were guardians of "the slow and weak," relieved burns with snow, cured cattle, sowed fields, and delivered sailors from storms.[4]

The Future Life.

This instinctive recognition of the divine in the human gave shape to the Vedic idea of a Future Life. The first man who had passed through

[1] *R. V.*, IV. 33, 35, 36; V. 31, 3.

[2] See Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-Lore*, p. 19.

[3] *R. V.*, X. 88, 15. (See Maury, *Croyances*, &c., 147.) Even if, as Néve supposes, the multiplication of the goblets for worship, as well as the other services to the gods ascribed to the Ribhavas, signify that they "extended the pomp and importance of the religious ritual," and represented the tendency to priestly organization in those early times, it will be none the less true that they were exalted to divinity for acts held in grateful remembrance as serviceable to men. That they were *merely* priests, or beloved for merely vicarious and official acts, the whole account of them in the *Rig Veda* disproves.

[4] See Muir, V. 242, and *R. V.*, I. 116–120. For remarks on the relations of the Ribhus and Pitris to the bright spirits or elves of the Teutonic mythology, see Kelly's *Indo-Europ. Folk-Lore*, p. 19.

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death waited, enthroned in immortal light, to welcome the good into his kingdom of joy.[1] This "Assembler and King of Men" in another life had himself been human, and knew all human needs. Death was thus Yama's kindly messenger, "to bring them to the homes he had gone before to prepare for them, and which could not be taken from them."[2] It was far in Varuna's world of perfect and undying light, in the "third heaven," in the very "sanctuary of the sky, and of the great waters," and in the bosom of the Highest Gods. Thither the fathers had gone, and "the earth, the air, and the sky were underneath them;" and thither the children were following, each on his own appointed path.[3] That which men desire is the attainment of good in the world where they may behold their parents and abide, free from infirmities, "where the One Being dwells beyond the stars."[4] The morning and evening twilight, the gloaming in which darkness mingles with light, were the "outstretched arms of death," the two watchful dogs of Yama, guiding men to their rest.[5] The poet sang the inevitable longing, and the assurance that has for ever come with it. "There make me immortal, where action is free, and all desires are fulfilled."[6] And age after age the simple tribes repeated the Hymn. And while the mourners for the dead, in their rude symbolism of mingled faith and fear, set a stone between themselves and the grave, and placed the clog upon the feet that were to move no more, and

[1] Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, IV. 426; *R. V.*, X. 1, 14.
[2] *R. V.*, IX. 113, 7.
[3] Hymns in *R. V.*, X.
[4] *R. V.*, X. 82, 2.
[5] Müller's *Science of Language*, II. 496.
[6] *Rig Veda Burial Hymns*, translated by Muir, *Sansk. Texts*, II. 468, and by Whitney, *Bib. Sac.*, 1859; Roth, *D. M. G.*, II. 225; IV. 428.

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took the bow from the nerveless hands, placing in them — in token of Nature's bounty and protecting care — portions of the body of the goat or cow, their trustful ritual made appeal to the Earth to "receive him kindly, and cover him with her garment as a mother her child;" to the Fire-gods, to "warm by their heat his immortal part;" and to the Guide of Souls, "to bear him by his sure paths to the world of the just." To the body it said, "Go to thy Mother, the wide-spread, bounteous, tender Earth. I lay the covering on thee: may it press lightly; thou feelest it not. Pass, at thy will, to the earth or sky." And to the spirit, "Go thou home to the fathers, on their ancient paths: lay aside what is evil in thee: guarded by Yama from his sharp-eyed sentinels, by right ways ascend to the farthest heaven, if thou hast deserved it, and dwell, in a shining body, with the gods. May the fathers watch thy grave, and Yama give thee a home."[1] "Let him depart," it is sometimes added, "to the mighty in battle; to the heroes who have laid down their lives for others, to those who have bestowed their goods on the poor."[2] "Wash the feet of him who is stained with sin," says the Atharva; "let him go upward with pure feet."

And so, amidst prayers, libations of water, and purifying fires, the loved were sped on their unseen way; and death was conquered, in these rude children of Nature, by an unquestioning trust in the eternal validity of virtue, in the fidelity of the departed, in

[1] Müller's *Transl. of Burial Hymns*, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, IX. [*Appendix*], and Whitney, *ut supra*. The tender invocation, "may it press lightly," was a part of the burial rite of the Greeks and Romans also. Eurip., *Alcest.*, 463; Juvenal, VII. 207.

[2] *R. V.*, X. 154.

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the care of a Providence as wide as their thought of being, or their need.

The honor paid by such childlike instincts of gratitude and trust to the souls of parents at their graves was the natural bond of these simple tribes with an unseen world and future life. The Śrâddha, or offering of rice-cakes to his father's spirit, is the first duty of the Hindu son; and it has descended from remotest antiquity. This oldest religion of filial piety appears in all branches of the Aryan race.

"So great," says Cicero, "is the sanctity of the tomb. Our ancestors have desired that those who departed this life should be held as deities."[1] Plato says: "Let men fear in the first place the gods above; next, the souls of the dead, to whom in the course of nature it belongs to have a care of their offspring."[2] The Latin "Dii Manes" and the Greek "Theci Chthonioi" correspond perfectly to the Vedic Pitris, blessed divinities who watch over their descendants, and expect their tribute of holy rites. The Pitris were in fact fathers of families, and represent the religion of those patriarchal times when the family, isolated and self-sustained, was the centre of social life and the foundation of all law and rite.

The spiritual body.

Whether the body was buried or burned, the garment of the spirit was to be fire, "the bright armor of Agni."[3] Of course it cannot here receive the symbolic meaning which it holds in the mature religious imagination, in the poetry of the later mystics. But it would be equally wrong to take it in a merely gross and material sense. In fact, we detect in it the natural

[1] *De Leg.*, II. 22. So Eurip., *Alcest.* "Stant manibus aræ:" Virgil (III. 64).

[2] *Laws*, XI. 8.

[3] *R. V.*, X. 14, 8; 16, 4. So, in the later epic belief, the perfect men, the great sages, cast off their old bodies and ascend in new ones of a splendor like the sun, and in chariots of fire.

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germ of all ideas, Christian or other, of *a spiritual body;* a blending of sense and soul; a clinging of the imagination and the affections to the familiar organs through which life has been manifested, as if still existing or destined to resume existence, even after they have turned to dust. Vedic Hymns not only exhort the fire "not to burn nor tear the body," but even invoke the fathers to "rejoice in heaven with all their limbs." Even the gods themselves have material enjoyments. Here it is the deep natural instinct of respect for life, that attributes permanence and power over death even to its corporeal exponents. But the maturer doctrines of a glorified spiritual body and a corporeal resurrection spring originally from the same instinct. They betray the same confused perception of the relations of the physical with the moral. And if this is not gross materialism in the Christian dogma, neither is it so in the Vedic hymn.

Of the same nature, and equally common among early races of the Aryan stock, is the apparent inconsistency of treating the departed spirit as if shut up under ground, and dependent on food provided at the grave by living relatives, while it is at the same time invoked as moving in a freer sphere, and addressed as conscious of their veneration and love.[1]

The moral aspect of Vedic immortality points to the same respect for life and its uses. The spirit in his armor of fire was not to live for self: he was to protect the good, to attend the gods, and to be like them.[2] Such is the immortal function of the *pitris*, as intimated in the hymns, which represent

Immortal Life.

[1] Juvenal, VII. 207; Eurip., *Alcest.*, 463,993–1003; *Helene*, 962; Virgil, *Æn.*, III. 67; *Cic. Tusc. Ques.*, I. 16; Ovid's *Metam.* [*Orph. and Euryd.*], X. 1 85.

[2] Roth in *D. M. G.*, I. 76; IV. 428; *R. V.*, X. 15.

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them as altogether happy therein. "They have adorned the sky with stars, placed darkness in the night and light in the day." Even when drinking up the libations of their worshippers, as if to satisfy physical thirst, they are busy in offices of guardianship. Their immortal life is none other than the *actual* life of the best men.

"On the path of the fathers, there are eight and eighty thousand patriarchal men, who turn back to the earthly life to sow righteousness and to succor it." [1]

"He who gives alms goes to the highest heaven, goes to the gods." [2]

"To be kind to the poor is to be greater than the great there." [3]

We find the same belief among the Greeks. "The souls of the dead," says Plato, reproducing the oldest faith of his race, "incline, like the gods, to the care of the orphans and the destitute: they are kind to those who act justly, but angry with those who act otherwise." [4]

No Inferno.

Vedic futurity has its heaven, but no very distinct traces of a hell.[5] Not that sins are without their penalties. This would be impossible in Varuna's world. "The Druhs, 'powers of evil,' follow the sins of men, binding as with cords." [6] But these simple hymns are natural outpouring of the trust, rather than of the fears or hates, of the poet. Their divinity is merciful, and loves to efface the marks of transgression. And the yearnings of the heart to brighten and warm the shadows of futurity leave no room for that sternness

[1] *R. V.*, X. 15; *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 186.
[2] *R. V.*, I. 125, 5, 6.
[3] See Müller, *Chips*, I. 46.
[4] *Laws*, XI. 8.
[5] The same is true of the oldest Chinese Scriptures, or "Kings." The Veda has two or three intimations of an abyss of darkness. Muir V. 312.
[6] *R. V.*, VII. 61, 5; 59, 8.

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of judgment which would blacken them with its own spirit of avenging wrath.[1] The theological hell of civilized races has been worked up with a refined vindictiveness, and a morbid exaggeration of moral evil under the name of organic "sin," that does not shrink from staining the eternity of God with blind inexorable hate. But this systematized ferocity in judicial logic comes from the perversion of *developed* mind and conscience. The childish familiarities of rude races with their gods are not so audacious and irreverent as this; and if they lack the constraints of its infernal terrors, they escape also their fearfully demoralizing power.

Here is a period of pure spontaneity in man's experience, before he had begun to brood over the hideous fantasy of everlasting woe; and we are glad to note how far the good impulses of Nature have sped him without the goads of that dismal lore. Spontaneity.

We hail the simplicity of these moral and spiritual instincts, so frank and direct, like the opening eyes of a child, or the movement of his limbs at play. This entire confidence in immortality was based on an intuitive trust in the continuity of life, and in destiny proportioned to the best desires. It associated itself with filial and parental love, a firm belief in the continued interest of ancestors, who had entered Varuna's world beyond death.

"Give me, O Agni, to the great Aditi, that I may again behold my father and my mother."[2]

[1] In the early teaching of Buddhism, there seems to have been a similar effect, arising from the intensity of sympathy and pity. Among certain savage races, as the Kamskadales and the North American Indians, there is no definite idea of a hell.

[2] *R. V.*, I. 24, 2.

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Such reliance on the demands of the affections is prophetic of immortality in its highest meaning. It comports, too, with the genial sense of present realities which predominates in these Hymns. Yet this very quality has perhaps led to an impression that they indicate but faint belief in a *future* existence. The constant tributes to the pitris, for example, have been represented as "*merely* an expression of grateful remembrance."[1] Such estimates fail of justice to that instinct of continued existence which would naturally be developed by a healthful confidence in life itself. It is earnest and deep in the Vedic poets, for the very reason that it is so closely associated with the affections. Every god and every good act, it would seem, was the promise of "immortality."

The sense of living, the feeling of real import in actual, present experience, must have been very intense in such a race as the Vedic Aryans. And this is ever the germ and the guarantee of all genuine sight in the direction of a future life. In the Rig Veda it is perfectly pure and simple: it has not a trace of the later schemes of transmigration, with their elaborate ingenuity of fear; nor of ascetic disciplines bartering comfort in this life for bliss in another. This religion is just the inborn impulse to believe, to aspire; the natural search that finds the hand it feels after, because it is this very hand that moves it to feel. "The belief in the immortality of the soul," says Burnouf, "not naked and inactive, but living and clothed with a glorious body, was never interrupted for a moment: it is now in India what it was in those ancient times, and even rests on a similar metaphysical basis."[2]

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, II. 436.
[2] *Le Veda*, p. 186.

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Here is as yet no idolatry nor organized priesthood, no ecclesiastical nor mediatorial authority. The Aryans had risen beyond the fetichism which is found in the *lowest* races to be without these elements,[1] to a stage which dispensed with them through higher insight. The parent, as transmitting the mysterious life principle, was the centre of religion. Each householder was as Arya, capable of immediate relation with the family deities; was priest and psalmist in one: and rites were still domestic.[2] There is no trace of the burning of widows, no prohibition of their marrying again. The filial instincts were the basis of a social order as yet innocent of castes.[3] The marriage relation had its sacramental rites; and polygamy, though not absent, was exceptional.[4] We are still farther from the barbarous custom of polyandry, which appears more distinctly in the epics, and of which a trace is discovered in but one Vedic hymn.[5]

Simplicity of life and worship.

A delicate sense of the significance of family ties is indicated in the words chosen to represent them, — words which remain in all Aryan tongues to testify of this fine instinct in the childhood of the race.[6] The sexes are on the same level, and the Vedic idea of their mutual relations strongly reminds us of that which prevailed in the old Germanic tribes.[7] The marriage rite by joining hands and walking round the

The sexes equal.

[1] See instances in Lubbock's *Origin of Civilization*.

[2] Wilson's *Introd. to Rig Veda;* Burnouf, p. 226.

[3] Haug, *Brahma und die Brahmanen*, affirms, contrary to the opinion of most scholars, that the castes existed in an organized form in the oldest Vedic times. At most, however, his illustrations seem to prove only that germs of these distinct orders of society were visible in the early rituals. His principal authority, *R. V.*, X. 90, is generally regarded as of late origin. See Muir's effective reply to this theory of Haug and Kern, in *Sanskrit Texts*, II. 457. Wilson, *R. V.*, II. xi.

[4] Muir, V. 457.

[5] Wheeler's *Hist. of India*, II. 502.

[6] Burnouf, *Le Veda*, ch. vii.

[7] Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, V. 177; Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*, II. 338.

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hearth does not seem to imply either a "natural" or "ordained" supremacy of the male over the female.[1] Husband and wife were equal in the household, and at the altar of sacrifice.[2] Woman cares for the sacred vessels, prepares the oblation, often composes the hymn. There are references, perhaps symbolical, to the mother of the altar fire, who gathers the Soma, and holds it in her bosom as a babe;[3] to the sacred mothers, who adorn this child of the sky.[4] There are hymns descriptive of domestic affection, and breathing the sentiment of love. The union of husband and wife is likened to the "embrace of Indra by the hymn." The sun follows the dawn as a man a woman; and the dawn is like "a radiant bride."

"As a loving wife shows herself to her husband, so does she, smiling, reveal her form; moving forth to arouse all creatures to their labors." "All life, all breath, is in thee, O Dawn, as thou ascendest. Rise, daughter of heaven, with blessings!"[5]

The religion of labor is honored in harvest hymns. The husbandman prays that "the ploughshare may cut the earth with good fortune." The physician blesses his healing herbs, and hints, with a touch of humor, that it is not a bad thing to cure the sick, and make money, at one stroke.[6] A democratic instinct has play in this Vedic community of functions, in which "the purohita could till the earth or pasture flocks, as well as crush the Soma or kindle the sacred fire."[7]

Ethics.

Some hymns have serious moral purport, and record the effects of vicious habits on personal and domestic happiness, in descriptions which have

[1] Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*, II. 338.
[2] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, pp. 37, 38; Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 28. *R. V.*, IX. 96.
[3] *R. V.*, V. 2, 1, 2. [4] Ibid., II. 33, 5.
[5] *Rig Veda*, II. 39, 2; I. 1, 23; X. 43, 1; I. 48, 92.
[6] *R. V.*, X. 97. Roth, in *D. M. G.*, XXV. [7] Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda*, p. 227.

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lost none of their truth for human nature by the lapse of three thousand years. The gambler "finds no comfort in his need: his dice give transient gifts, and ruin the winner: he is vexed to see his own wife, and the wives and happy homes of other men." Rudra is entreated not to "take advantage, *like a trader*, of his worshippers." "Men anoint Savitri with milk, when he makes man and wife of one mind."

Here too are philanthropic sayings:—

"I regard as king of men him who first presented a gift."

"The wise man makes the giving of largess his breastplate."

"The bountiful suffer neither want nor pain."

"The car of bounty rolls on easy wheels."

"He who, provided with food, hardens his heart against the poor, meets with none to cheer him. Let every one depart from such an one: his house is no home."

"Let the powerful be generous to the suppliant: let him look to the long path."

"For riches revolve like wheels: they come now to one, and now to another."

"He who keeps his food to himself has his sin to himself also."[1]

And here finally is a quaint benediction from the later Atharva Veda, which sounds like an echo of this simpler domestic age:—

"I perform an incantation in your house. I impart to you concord, with delight in each other, as of a cow at the birth of her calf. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister sister."[2]

Of the Vedic sacrifices, we cannot speak so positively. Yet, so far as we can see, there was the same frankness and simplicity in these as in other matters. Sacrifice is always from the highest to the lowest, from the earliest to the latest form, in some sense the consecration of one's best and dearest possession to his ideal. Even in the

Meaning of sacrifice.

[1] *R V.*, X. 107, 117 (Muir).

[2] *Ath. Ved.*, III. 30.

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lowest tribes this cannot be the mere reluctant service of fear, or atonement of sin: gratitude, trust, and love, must mingle in these primal relations with the invisible. And the very sincerity of the instinct involves searching for the mysterious and even the noble qualities of things, beyond their mere barter price; an effort to discover their representative values; in other words, an ideal aim.

Vedic sacrifices.

And so the Aryan offered these three gifts: *the plant*, whose juices promised new life to all inactive powers; *clarified butter*, as choicest gift of his herds and his simple art, just as the Hebrew offered his corn and wine; and, above all, *fire*, as the purest of elements, the light and life of nature and of man. These his best he brought with awe,[1] not only as his own choice, but as themselves partaking of the divinity, to whom he yielded them as to their natural source and home. He had chosen them *because* he saw divineness in them; for nothing less than a god could meet his desire. In the sacrificial act he stood their ministrant; to further, not to destroy, their life. It was meant not only to effectuate their saving power towards himself, but also to second their own inmost purpose, and inspire the divinity with the joy of finding his own; speeding the inherent goodwill that nestled within them to its fulfilment in the bright track of the altar flame. The offering, this bright Agni, was thus a radiant messenger, swift to bring the earthly blessing and the divine society, and winged with freedom and delight. Do we not note here in its early form that intuition, which makes the saint or martyr see his own powers transfigured, by the ideal to which they have been dedicated, as his

[1] *Rig Veda*, I. 91; VI. 47; VI. 16, 42.

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best gift? Such meaning was hinted in Soma, symbol of life given for the good of men, to quicken them to "immortality." It is the vital fire of the universe poured out through the mystery of death in the plant, to resurrection in the flame. "It generates the great light of day, common to all mankind."[1]

This covering up of destruction by consecration, this absorption of the death involved in sacrifice by the life it is to effect, this belief in the exaltation of the victims above all loss, through satisfaction of the divine affinities within them, — is forever the significant fact in the sacrificial impulse, under whatever name it appears. Even its darkest forms are interwoven with this redeeming instinct. This is our key to the painful fact that at some time or in some form human sacrifice has been the custom of almost every race of men.[2] It has everywhere been regarded, to a greater or less extent, as an exaltation of the victim, a fulfilment of his best desire; as his sublime opportunity of representing the affections of the worshippers, the atonement of their sins, or the assurance of their hopes. Thus the Nicaraguans believed that only such as offered themselves on the funeral piles of the chiefs would become immortal.[3] The Aztec victim was held to be the favorite of the god; and every gift and honor was lavished on him in preparation for his exalted destiny. We are told of a Mexican king who devoted himself with many of his lords to sacrificial death, to efface the dishonor of an insult![4] The Khonds regard their chosen human victims as divine, rear them with utmost tenderness,

Human sacrifices.

[1] *Rig Veda*, IX. 61.

[2] The sad record is summed up in Baring Gould's work on the *Origin of Religious Belief*, ch. xviii. See also Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*, vol. ii.

[3] Brinton's *Myths*, &c., p. 145.

[4] Prescott's *Mexico*, I. 84.

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and teach them that a noble destiny awaits them.[1] The choice of such victims as were free from blemish, as well as most precious and honored, whether of beast or man, in the rites of Baal, Moloch, or Zeus, is sufficient evidence that the fate was believed to be essentially a blessing. In the Râmâyana, the hermit Sarabhanga, believing himself desired by Brahmâ for his heaven, only defers self-immolation till Râma's coming. Having seen this incarnation, he is content, and "hastens to cast off his body as a serpent his slough." He prepares a funeral pile, enters the fire, and being burned, arises as a youth from the ashes, bright as flame.[2]

The burning of widows with their husbands, practised under Brahmanical rules, and not yet quite extinct, was not only commended by the hope of rejoining the lost, but even desired as a crown of glory in the eyes of the assembled people. It was also a deliverance from the doom to solitary asceticism, or to new repulsive relations for securing male descendants to the deceased. Mutual attachment alone would have made *sati* quite natural under these circumstances.[3] It has been estimated that five-sixths of the women who undergo it are moved by devotion to their affections.[4] The actual spirit of this rite lifts it high among those forms of martyrdom which have grown out of ignorant notions of duty, whether Pagan or Christian. Women have been seen seated in the flames, lifting their joined hands as calmly as if at ordinary prayer.[5] Ibn Batuta reports, in the fourteenth century, that the woman was usually surrounded

[1] Mrs. Spier's *India*, p. 21. [2] Râmâyana, B. III.
[3] See Wheeler's *Hist. of India*, II. 116, and Arnold's *Life of Dalhousie*, II. 316.
[4] Arnold, II. 314. [5] *Life of Elphinstone*, I. 360.

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by friends who gave her commissions to spirits departed, while she laughed, played, or danced, down to the moment of being burnt. And the Dabistân tells us it is "not considered right to force a woman into the fire."

In the Mahâbhârata, two widows of a râja dispute for the privilege, one pleading that she was the favorite wife, the other that she was the first and chief. Herodotus mentions the custom of the Thracians to select the best beloved wife for this honor, to the grief of the rest.[1] And the Norse Sagas refer to widows who, like Nanna, the wife of Baldur, insisted on following their dead husbands and sharing their destiny.[2]

If, then, human sacrifice existed among the Vedic Aryans, it must have been regarded as an exaltation of the victim; and to a greater extent than we can now realize accepted by him as such. Even in the later Purânas, this barbarous rite, which had become a part of the established worship of Śiva, is found still penetrated by such beliefs; and without them would surely have been a far more cruel superstition than it was. Siva declares the victim to be "even as himself." Brahmâ and all the deities "assemble in him, and be he ever so great a sinner he is made pure, and gains the love of the universe."[3] That such sacrifices were ever offered by the Vedic Aryans is by no means clear; and the supposed notices of this, as well as of the "Horse Sacrifice," in the Hymns and the Brâhmanas, are very uncertain historical data;[4] while sacrifices destructive of life in any

In the Veda.

[1] Herod., V. 5.
[2] Keyser, *Private Life of the Northmen*, p. 42.
[3] *Kalikâ Purâna*, *As. Res.*, vol. v.
[4] See, on one hand, Colebrooke (I. 61, 62); Wilson, in *As. Jour.*, XVII.; Roth, in

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form seldom appear in the Rig Veda."[1] There is nowhere any mention of human sacrifices, *in distinct terms*, in the whole Rig Veda; and the only evidence for even an allusion to them rests on an inference from the later form of one old Vedic legend. Śunahśepa; afterwards the centre of this sacrificial tale, is in the Vedic Hymn itself simply a prisoner, bound and in deadly peril, who is delivered through his prayer to Varuna, as Master of life and death. And so the poet sings, "May He, the far-ruling One, hear us without wrath, taking not away our life. This they say to me day and night; this my own heart teaches me. He whom the fettered Śunahśepa sought in prayer, Varuna our King, shall us also free."[2] There is no necessary allusion here to a sacrificial rite; and the only ground for supposing such reference is in the mythic story found in the later Aitareya Brâhmana;[3] in which Śunahśepa is the son of a starving Brahman, and bought for a price, to be offered to Varuna, as substitute for a certain prince, who, having been devoted from his birth, is taking this method to ransom himself from the doom. Here also Varuna acts the part not of a destroying, but of a preserving God, which is his natural function in old Hindu faith. For again and again he defers exacting his claim to the prince's life, and when Śunahśepa is

Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, II. 112. On the other, Müller's strongly expressed suspicions, *Sansk. Lit.*, 419, and Weber's additional illustrations to confirm them, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XVIII. 262. Of the two Vedic Hymns concerning the Horse Sacrifice, "one at least," says Burnouf, "is certainly symbolical;" and Weber himself has shown (*ut supra*, p. 276) that the long list of *persons of every class*, enumerated as victims in the Vâyasaneyi Sanhitâ, must certainly be, in part if not altogether, of a similar character.

[1] Wilson's *Introd.*, xxiv.

[2] *R. V.*, I. 7, 1, 12; V. 1, 2, 7.

[3] See Müller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 408; Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, II. 112. The myth of a sacrifice of Purusha, the Spirit, by the gods (*R. V.*, X. 90), believed by Haug to prove the existence of human sacrifice in the oldest time, is regarded by Muir as of late origin.

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bound in his stead, at the altar, answers his prayer, as in the older legend, with deliverance, bidding him "praise the gods and so be free."

Here, however, it is plainly implied that men were sometimes offered up in these *post*-Vedic ages of the Brâhmanas. The same ages record a substitution of the horse for man as a sacrificial victim; then of the ox for the horse; then successively of the sheep, the goat, and lastly of the earth and its products.[1] These mythic intimations of what was perhaps historic fact derive strength from analogous legends recorded of other races; as that of the ram substituted for Isaac in the Hebrew story, and of the hind received for Iphigenia, by Diana, in the Greek. Manetho relates that Amasis, King of Egypt, abolished the sacrifices of Typhonic men at the tomb of Osiris, and substituted wax figures; and Ovid, that images made of bulrushes were thrown into the Tiber in place of the old sacrifices of living beings. Many Greek heroes are credited with abolishing this barbarity, as Cecrops, Hercules, Theseus. And to Krishna in the Mahâbhârata myth, who punishes it as a crime to have offered victims to Siva, corresponds the historical Mexican monarch, who delivered Anahuac from similar rites.

Records of human sacrifice.

These analogies, however, do not prove that the custom in India went back, as Haug has insisted, to Vedic times. Such testimonies, if mythologic, may but prove a consciousness of the inherent cruelty of such forms of worship, and the desire to find far back in antiquity an authority for discontinuing them. They would thus testify to a germ of progress, even in stages of social decay. That human

Results.

[1] *Aitareya Brâhmana*, as quoted by Müller.

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sacrifices were offered in later periods of Hindu history is certain; but there may well have been an earlier age when they had not yet an existence, as there was for that noble Toltec civilization on the Western continent, whose pure and simple religion was all engulfed in the sanguinary institutions of the Aztecs. And there is much in the character of Vedic civilization to make us hesitate, in the present state of the evidence, to believe that it could have mingled immolation of men with its simple offerings of the product of the dairy and the plant of the field.

Different forms of human sacrifice.

The Vedic gods were indeed believed to approve the destruction of the evil-doer who offended their people and resisted their claims; and to slay "godless Dasyus" was an acceptable service. But this desire to find a religious sanction for inflicting extreme penalties on real or imagined crime is manifestly to be distinguished from the desire to please the deity by bestowing on him a human victim purely as an oblation. The national gods of the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Norseman, were appealed to in the same way, as fully disposed to destroy their enemies, and to accept for service such revenges as the worshipper chose to inflict in their name, on his own. Substantially the same spirit is ascribed to the Christian God in the doctrine of eternal punishment, which is simply a refinement of the belief that deity would fain deal inexorably with its foes, though carried over into the other life and from physical to eternal woe. It appears frequently in the New Testament,[1] and apparently comes from the lips of Jesus,[2] as well as from the intolerant disciple he rebukes. But incomparably

[1] Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Romans ix. 17–23; 1 Tim. i. 20; Apocalypse, *passim*.
[2] Matt. x. 33; xii. 32; xxiii. 33; xviii. 17, 18, 35; xxv. 41.

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the worst form of the inference that God is pleased by the severest punishment of crime is to be found in those bloody inquisitions upon the persons of heretics and witches, in which Christian ages have certainly surpassed all others in human history. Many instances in Hebrew annals, mistaken for human sacrifices,[1] were of this character. They were in fact barbarous *penalties* inflicted on actual or supposed criminals; such as "hewing" hostile kings in pieces, and "hanging up" law-breakers or tyrannical families "before the Lord," and "consecrating" one's self to Him, by putting to the sword those who had relapsed into idolatry. They were simply the earlier analogues of modern Christian rejoicings over barbarous massacres of the heathen in India and Algeria, and of Christian arguments for the death penalty as based on a commandment of God. In all these cruel atonements, the victim is held to be *paying the penalty for his sins;* and they differ very decidedly from human sacrifices in the proper sense, such as Jephthah's offering of his virgin daughter, or the abominations of Baal worship,[2] or the dreadful *Cherem*, devoting to death men "not to be redeemed;"[3] or, we may add, the Christian "atonement," which is of essentially similar nature, — a death of the best to satisfy divine justice for the sin of the worst.

In the former or simply primitive class of sacrifices, the Vedic age of course abounded; though there is no evidence of special cruelty in their warfare, or special barbarism either in dealing with offenders, or in gratifying personal revenge. Of distinctive human sacrifice there seems on the whole to be no positive proof.

[1] Numbers, xxv. 4, 13; xxi. 2; 1 Sam. xv. 33; 2 Sam. xxi. 9; Exod. xxii. 27, 29. See Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, II. 456.

[2] Psalm cvi. 38; Ezek. xx. 31.

[3] Levit. xxvii. 28.

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Free bearing towards the gods.

It is said in a Hymn in praise of Vishnu that "men worship him, offering him their libation face to face."[1] And Agni is ever a "companion" and "confidant." We note with especial interest this cordial freedom in the bearing of the early Aryans towards their gods. Deity was the "gracious, well-beloved guest" of the householder's altar and hearth, invited to find home there, to give and receive; praised among the people as their "food and dwelling," reverenced as a "kinsman" and "friend."[2] So the Greeks addressed the gods standing, and sometimes prayed sitting. The Homeric heroes converse freely with the Olympians, whose human interests are as profound and absorbing as their divine; are in fact one and the same thing with these. And this was not due to irreverence, or to a low ideal of the divine. It was partly a form of childlike confidence, and partly a manly self-respect, to which slavishness was unknown and impossible. While the religious sentiment is yet untaught by science, this freedom is a strong defence; and wherever in such epochs it does not exist, there must be grovelling fear before the phantoms of the religious fancy; and thence that blind intolerance and savage cruelty which befit the spiritual slave.

Our debt to Polytheism.

It is one of the grand compensations for all errors involved in polytheism, that it consulted individual liberty far more than the stern exclusiveness and absolute will of monotheism. Its principle has been finely stated to be the "independence of forces."[3] The soul protects its own right to grow in every direction, by creating a divine balance of powers; the basis of which is in its instinct of

[1] *R. V.*, X. 1, 3. [2] Ibid., IV. 1, 20; VI. 16, 42; VI. 2. 7, 8; I. 31, 10.
[3] Ménard, *La Morale avant les Philosophes*, p. 94.

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equal justice to all. And thus while the religion of the monotheistic Semites, wherever it has followed its native instincts, has proved ungenial to many forms of growth, that of the polytheistic Aryans has been a hearty tolerance, inviting the full expansion of human nature. But for Greek liberty and culture, Hebrew concentration on the Unity of God, descending through its Christian modifications, would, with all the purity of its spiritual ideals, have been to the modern world a legacy of moral bondage and intellectual death. The early error had its truth, which saved us from that one-sided and narrow view of another truth, which would make it error. Faith in many gods was in fact a recognition of that manifoldness of expression by which the divine really becomes human; and therefore, in the beautiful and orderly path of human evolution, it has not been wanting; so that we know how to worship The One in fulness of free opportunity and integrity of culture. The keys of progress were not committed to any single race or religion. Greek and Jew alike were inspired; alike heard eternal truths, and bore divine messages to the generations whose day was to be more liberal for the mingled light of this twofold dawn. The Semite has sought to preserve the principle of authority in the divine; the Aryan, that of development in the human. Only the maturer reason of man could learn the true meaning of both these principles and their unity in Universal Religion.

The Hebrew, or Christian, and the Aryan Bibles are very unlike each other. The resemblance of the praises of Indra or Varuna to the praises of Jehovah goes, after all, but a little way. Even the Gospel of John, with all its Alexandrian inspiration, is touched

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only at certain points with the creative religious imagination of the Aryan mind. Semitic ardor has warmed and illumined many of the dark passages of nature and life. But the Rishis also, lovers and searchers of the Light, "saw" what they sang. The debt we owe to the prophets and psalmists of Jehovah, and to the Christian ideal, we are not likely to overlook or to undervalue. But we do need to be reminded of other historical obligations and affinities. The monotheist, whether of Athens, Rome, or Palestine, was not the sole parent of our modern faith. The plastic susceptibility which secures it from permanent intolerance, opening broad paths of experience in every direction, comes, so far as it depends on the past, of our *polythcistic* affinities and descent. Our liberty and our science, the sense of free communion with God and Nature through principles, ideas, laws, — are in the line of the Veda rather than of the Thora or the Gospels. These Aryan children feel no separation from God through their thirst to know. To them deity is not apart from man, but *in* him, revealed in the free play of his own energies. They look straight at the facts with their own eyes, not as aliens, and under ban; no sense of a "fall" comes in between to disable the natural sight, nor is miracle made to disparage the familiar facts of life; no exclusive incarnation limits the divine meaning of Nature as a whole; no external authority judges or supplants free thought, aspiration, pursuit of truth. The modern spirit recognizes its own features here in their infancy. This is plainly the inextinguishable spark that has flamed at last into our free arts and sciences and beliefs, and shines with steady radiance in the civilization that issues in such diverse types of universality as Goethe

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and Humboldt and Emerson. And for the germs of this our larger opportunity, which guarantees wisdom and gladness to man's present and future thought; of his genial outlook upon life as a home, and his fearless hospitality to its forces and laws; of the home-born courage to use all faculties and open all paths; of the assurance that we are not slaves of prescription, whether to person, creed, or distinctive religion, but natural heirs to universal truth; of the self-respect whose religion is rational, and the liberty whose ideal is endless progress, — we must go back to the frank Aryan herdsman, inviting his gods to sit as guests beside him on his heap of Kusa-grass.

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IV.

TRADITION.

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TRADITION.

"AND Brahma said to Manu, 'Divide the Veda, O Sage! The age is changed; the strength, the fire is gone down; every thing is on the path of decay.'" This passage from the Vâyu Purâna shows us that the later Hindus were not without perception of the causes which brought three ritualistic Scriptures out of the simple Rig Veda Hymns.

Limits of degeneracy.

The spontaneity of a germinant faith greets us only to disappear. We are to pass from primitive Aryan piety along a track, such as every religion has seemed fated to tread; wherein we should find bitter discouragement, as being led ever further from the promise of the morning, were not every lapse the guarantee of a coming self-recovery of human nature, the nobler for the depth of the apparent fall. We shall see this social equality exchanged for the complex hierarchy of caste; this liberty of private worship for the despotism of an official priesthood; this inspiration for the pedantic echoes of past revelations, themselves regarded as but mediators of a yet older gospel, — those same manly Hymns which we have just now admired as made to rebuke, not to compel, a servile fear. We shall see this genial practical vigor yield to expiatory sacrifices and the

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terrors of transmigration; this freedom of the mountaineer to the enervation of dreamers among tropical banyans and palms. In a word, we shall note a two-fold degeneracy, caused by the forces of Ecclesiastical Organization and Physical Nature.

But this is by no means a full account of the process; and that we may deal fair measure in our interpretation of it, we must be able to enter into the spirit of these remote civilizations, as we would enter into the inner life of a new personality, to do it justice for its own sake.

Oriental worship of the past.

At the outset then, let us appreciate that *Worship of Tradition*, which lies at the root of Oriental faith. It is not to be judged by the patent vices of modern traditional*ism*, whose preference of outworn, lifeless finalities to an ever-open spirit of inquiry is not a foundation of faith, but a form of unbelief. This is a trailing shadow, flowing away from the living substance of worship. But, whatever else was wanting to it, Oriental veneration for the Past was at least a fervent and supreme faith. That profound absorption in religious sentiment which we saw in the Veda is typical of the whole mind of these Eastern races. Their tradition-worship was a rude form of reverence for the Eternal: it was *awe before everlastingness*. They built their temples and hewed out their caves and their rock statues on a scale that should symbolize this awe. It was because the religious books, rites, legends, hymns, seemed as old as the stars and streams and patriarchal trees, and memory went not back to their beginnings, that they were held sacred. Their permanence belittled the fleeting lives, the vanishing dreams and deeds of men: it did not minister to their vanity, but to their humility. Man

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could have had things so ancient and so stable, only of God. If the hoary head was believed the patriarchal chrism, the visible sign of divine appointment to the oldest priesthood, much more should God be present in words white with the love and awe of untold generations; words which could no more come to death than they could be traced back to any mortal birth. The earliest sense of immortality came, as we have seen, in the feeling of a continuous existence traceable through the *pitris* or progenitors, and in the aspiration to become one with them in their inviolable home; for the serene silence of the past in which they dwelt was a fit shrine to hold the moral and spiritual idealism of their descendants. "The pitris," according to this faith, "are free from wrath, intent on purity, without sensual passion; primeval divinities, who have laid strife aside."[1] It was a worship founded in gratitude, the apotheosis of the tenderest sentiments. "A parent's care in producing and rearing children," says the law, "cannot be compensated in a hundred years."[2] This authority of ideal love and duty penetrated all worlds. Even the gods could not turn recreant to the past, and forsake their duties to progenitors, without penalty: they were even invoked by the priests, in sacrifice, by the names of their special ancestry.[3]

Reverence for the Vedas.

Under such conditions, Bibliolatry deserves a certain respect. As these old Vedic Hymns, in process of time, came to be collected, arranged, and enlarged into Sâmaveda and Yajurveda for purposes of ritual service, we note indeed the failure of inspiration, and the growth of ecclesias-

[1] *Manu*, (II. 192.
[2] Ibid., II. 227
[3] Müller, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 386.

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ticism; yet there is something tender as well as noble in the faithfulness with which the Hindu cherished them as "reminiscences of a former state;"[1] as "words heard from above,"[2] committed to him by a long line of ancestors, who still sought him with yearning care, and who were cherished with the whole strength of his affections; their primitive Sanskrit the very language of God; their syllables so full of virtue that they needed not to be uttered or even understood, only silently whispered in the heart; yet every one of them laden with ineffable meanings, which endless commentaries sought in vain to exhaust; laden with Brâhmanas, Upanishads, Sutras, Purânas; literally a thousand schools of biblical science founded on their mooted texts; wells of theology, literature, science, legislation, for ever brimming, let never so much be drawn off from age to age.[3] It is but a *childish* thought of everlastingness; but this child is Humanity! Then how colossal that outgrowth of the intuition, how utter that faith, how prodigal that toil in its service! And if age be indeed venerable, surely there was better ground for such Bibliolatry than for any other that has ever existed. What records, what institutions, can be called time-hallowed by the side of these? When Solon boasted of the antiquity of Greek wisdom, the old priest of Sais led him through the sepulchral chambers, showed him the tombs of a hundred dynas-

[1] *The Vedânta.* [2] *Manu.*

[3] Manu (XII. 94–102) declares the Vedas "an eye giving constant light, not made by man, nor to be measured by his powers. All that has been, is, or shall be, is revealed by them; all creatures are sustained, all authority is imparted, all prosperity given, by the knowledge of these, which burns out the taint of sin, and makes one approach the divine nature though he sojourns in this low world." — "Brahma has milked out of them three holy letters, — A. U. M.; three mystic words, — Earth, Sky, Heaven; three sacred measures of verse, — the Gâyatri: and these immutable things, the essence of this wisdom that was from the beginning, shall be sanctity and salvation to him who ceaselessly utters them with faith." II. 74–84.

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ties, recounted to him the annals of nine thousand years, and admonished him that he was but a child, that there lived no aged Greek. "You have no remote tradition, O Solon, nor any discipline that is hoary with age." What must the pandits of Benarès think of the Christian missionary, who would supplant their veneration for the Sanskrit Vedas by claiming that divine guardianship has transmitted his Greek or even his Hebrew Scriptures? Wherein is his advantage? Is not *every* Bible a cup that holds what the drinker wills? "Every one who pleases," says the Dabistân, "may derive from the Vedas arguments in favor of his particular creed, to such a degree that they can support by clear proofs the philosophical, mystical, unitarian, and atheistical systems; Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Fire-worship, the tenets of the Sonites or Shiites; in short, these volumes consist of such ingenious parables and sublime meanings, that all who seek may find their wishes fulfilled."[1]

A mature, self-conscious generation cannot compete with races of instinctive faith, upon their own ground, without making itself more childish than they. Its own liberty to inquire and grow is what represents, in a nobler way, that very authority of age which tradition-worship but dimly divined. Nature is older than ritual or Bible, and the personality of Man more venerable, even with years, than all his "special revelations." We cannot forsake the insight nor the tasks of the man for the unquestioning credence of the child. But in the child we none the less admire a tender respect for age. We recognize the "trailing cloud of glory;" a filial instinct towards eternity; an inborn sense of our affinity with imperishable life.

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. II. 2.

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Memory: its divine function.

To the unfolding consciousness of the race as of the individual, the first great mystery is memory. All dear and honored things pass into one silent but living fold, and there await the call that evokes them from their sleep. There death is incessantly overcome, and swallowed up in resurrection. In this light of endless preservation and renovation the fact of immortality is first revealed. Megasthenes tells us that no monuments were erected in India to the dead, because the people believed that their virtues would make them immortal in the *memory of posterity*. We are far away now from those days when man bent in natural wonder before this experience of renewal. The memory is, for us, one of many faculties, into which our science has analyzed the mind, and with which we have grown but too familiar as human instruments to venerate them as mysteries of power. But to the awakening soul it was the wonder of wonders, the power of powers. It might well be, as it was, the earliest purely spiritual deity of the human race. It was the only preserver of man's "winged words," the only conductor between his past and his future; and its stupendous achievements were at once result and warrant of the reverent culture it received. For many centuries the treasures of human experience, of hymn, meditation, and ritual, accumulating from remotest time, were in its keeping alone; and the immense deposit was transmitted more faithfully than by the later devices of writing and printing. The prophet was "the rememberer," the "bearer on" of an ancient message. *Never to forget* was the most sacred and tender duty. The Greeks preserved Homer in their memory alone for four hundred years. Down to the time of Buddha there is no positive evidence of

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a *written* Sanskrit. Veda does not mean Scriptures, does not mean Bible, or Book at all, but, more spiritually, *Wisdom*. The Hindus know no dearer name for it than "Words remembered from the beginning." Through indefinite ages this whole literature was transmitted in this invisible way, by means of incessant mnemonic practice,[1] and guarded from the desecrating hand of the penman, even after the introduction of writing, by stern prohibitions as well as by traditional contempt. And it has been finely suggested that the ample satisfaction afforded to every need of intellectual and religious communication, by their splendid culture of the memory, may have prevented the early Hindus from inventing a written alphabet; an achievement which other races, such as the Chinese, Egyptians, and Hebrews, owed to their inability to mature this more intellectual instrument.[2] In Plato's Egyptian myth in the Phædrus, the god who invents letters as a medicine for memory is told that he is doing detriment to the mind, by teaching men to remember outwardly by means of foreign marks, instead of inwardly, by their own faculties. We can at least admire the fine economy of Nature, in opening the resources of this faculty in men, while as yet science had not secured other means of preserving and transmitting thought. How should we ever, in this age of discontinuous reading and ephemeral journalism, — chopped feed for ruining these powers, — come to realize, as Müller has well suggested, how vast they are?

Thus even Oriental worship of tradition has its own proper root in human nature, and its noble germs also

[1] See Müller's account of such exercises in Hindu schools, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 504.
[2] Pictet, II. 558.

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of future dignities; nor had those children of memory turned their faces, like our religious traditionalists, coldly and unbelievingly to a *dead* Past.

Oriental ritualism an ideal.

And so, when we see the Hindu slowly elaborating his minute ritualism [1] in that still life along the Ganges, twenty-five hundred years ago, until he had transferred, out of his brooding thought of the Everlasting, its inviolable permanence into all works and ways, we cannot permit any superstition or puerility involved in it to hide the fact that it brings also its incentives to respect for human nature. That hypocrisy and sanctimony were quite as possible in this as in any other religious form, is palpable; but the *essence* of Oriental ritualism was certainly *reality*. The absorbed ascetic, girt with sacrificial cord, gesticulating before animals and plants, bowing to his platter, walking round it, wetting his eyes, shutting his nostrils and mouth by turns, muttering spells as in a dream, performing his three suppressions of the breath, whispering the three sacred letters, pronouncing at intervals the three holy words and measures,[2] is to nature, reason, and common sense, in many ways, an unedifying spectacle; yet, as compared with much modern formalism of a less detailed and visible sort, he will compel a serious moral esteem. "These Hindu gesticulations," says Professor Wilson,[3] "are not subjects of ridicule, because reverentially practised by men of sense and learning." That quaint writer, James Howell, the contemporary of Sir Thomas Browne, whom he in many ways resembled, tells us frankly: "I knock thrice every day at heaven's gate,

[1] See the microscopic regulation of times, rites, food, and auguries detailed in the first book of Yâjnavalkya's Law Code, and the fifth of Manu.

[2] *Manu*, II. 74.

[3] *Essays on Hindu Religion*, II. 57.

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besides prayers at meals, and other occasional ejaculations, as upon the putting on of a clean shirt, washing my hands, and lighting the candles. And as I pray thrice a day, so I fast thrice a week," &c. These quaint devotions, somewhat in the Oriental spirit, may help us to distinguish the idea which its round of observances sought to embody, from the formalism of mercantile piety that pays off a business-like God at a fixed rate, in days, words, and rites; setting apart for this exalted Personage, a Church, a Bible, an abstract morality, that it may keep its houses, trades, politics, and practical prudence for quite other dedications. Oriental ceremonial was at least essentially an effort to cover the *whole* of life with divine relation. It was recognized that the primacy of religion did not cease at some given point, where men may have chosen to draw the line. That is not religion whose outward law and set plan fastens on us like a thumb-screw, is endured as penance, and gladly thrown off to escape the pain and awkwardness of its constraints. Relations which are affirmed in theory to be unnatural and shown in practice to be so by systematic evasion, have certainly little to do with either faith or freedom.

Behind the dreary ceremonialism of the old religions, there is the aspiration of an ideal. The despotism of priestcraft does not explain such phenomena as the requirements of Burmese law, that a priest when eating shall inwardly say, "I eat not to please my palate, but to support life;" when dressing, "I put on these robes, not to be vain of them, but to conceal my nakedness;" and in taking medicine, "I desire recovery, only that I may be the more diligent in

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devotion."[1] That minute regulation of the form, whether inward or outward, in which we should find the death not of spontaneity only, but of sincerity, must be taken in connection with the permanent habit of the Oriental mind, which in each individual was itself, more or less, a constant reproduction of the original meaning of the precept. The instinctive demand for enduring things required that the whole of life should reflect divine unchangeableness, from the largest relations to the least. There must be nothing hurried, erratic, impulsive: all must be fixed and serene, an image of brooding deity. Human action had surer determination than the impulses of the moment. Fate was the dearest of divinities to these contemplative minds, because it expressed this idea of an unalterable path, and satisfied this instinctive yearning for absolute devotion to the religious ideal. Where reason has not yet come to its sure revolt against implicit faith, men move in the chains of habit, which they themselves have forged, with slight sense of bondage, and without the moral degradation which always enters with enforced conformity. There is freedom in spontaneity, even of Religious Form.

Its freedom.

It is generally allowed that the Oriental races wear their robes of ceremony, whether in worship or in manners, with real ease, and even a strange grace, in spite of endless petty elaboration. "There is more civility and grace among all classes in India," we are told, "than in corresponding classes in Europe and America."[2] This is because their etiquette is spontaneous, without doubleness and self-rebuke in the person, a wholeness, a genuine faith.

[1] Malcom, *Travels in Burmah.*

[2] Allen's *India*, p. 483.

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Manners are here a part of religion, and common actions grow punctilious from an instinctive sense of accord with the ideal form. There is, I doubt not, a kind of freshness and even freedom in the Hebrew boy, as he binds the thongs of his tephillin seven times round his wrist, and thrice round his finger, and repeats the formularies over every bit of food, and at sight of every change that passes over the face of Nature, and on the "enjoyment of any new thing."[1] For the Hebrew still retains in some measure the infantile faith in forms as the natural body of piety, and in piety which clothes the whole of life in a time-hallowed ritual. It is not Form *as such* that is ungracious, constrained, or undevout, but forms that do not express the life in its unity and integrity. In the instinctive ease and freedom of Oriental routine there is even an image, not so faint as to be insignificant, of that perfect liberty of the wise and just person, whose every act is unconditional, inevitable, precise as the planet's sweep.

> "Slight those who say, amidst their sickly healths,
> Thou livest by rule. What doth not so, but man?
> Houses are built by rule, and commonwealths.
> Entice the hasty sun, if but you can,
> From his ecliptic line: beckon the sky!
> Who lives by rule then, keeps good company."

There is a self-idolatry of passions and cupidities, a failure of respect for great social and moral traditions of civilization, on which order and culture, as well as purity and decency stand, that would remand us to infinitely worse barbarism than all the tradition-worship of the older races combined.

[1] See *Instructions in the Mosaic Religion*, from the German of Johlson (Philadelphia, 1830), p. 112.

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The ritualism of Eastern devotees is of course not the intelligent freedom of living according to universal laws of culture and use. But at least the ease, precision, and minute perfection of both, flow alike from free surrender of the whole life to the ideal faith; though this faith be ever so different in the two cases, and though in the one case the principle itself be but germinant, in the other mature.

The protest of thought.

When we recognize therefore that in all the history of religious forms there is nothing like Hindu ritualism for complexity, thoroughness, and rigor, we really concede to this people a certain pre-eminent integrity in its religious conviction. We have here in fact a great, all-surrounding abstract idea, admitting no exception, no evasion, no compromise, no practical limit. It is the first product of that pure brain-work which makes the inward life of the Aryans of the Ganges. In their clime of beating suns and towering forests, one element of the old Iranian energy made vigorous protest against the forces of physical nature, — the *intellectual* element. It would create after its own vast aspiration, even though it were in *idea only*. Of the manifold beauty and wealth of which this dream-life was capable, the whole history of Hindu poetry, from the Vedas to the Purânas, is the impressive record. In philosophy and religion, the contemplative faculty produced yet more marvellous results. Its grasp on pure ideas was extraordinary, and its faith in living by them absolute. It was bound to take the whole of life into its mighty impulse to create and rule. It was bound to construct all forms of action in the image of its own eternity; a world whose very freedom should be in the absoluteness of its sure and perfect ways. So that in the

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absence of that struggle with practical conditions and for visible uses which educates us to independence and progress, ritualism, all-pervading and all-ordaining, became the natural language of its ideal; the more so in proportion as it sought to organize itself in a Brahmanical or other ecclesiastical communion.

For how insignificant and impotent would the individual come to appear, seen through this absorbing vision of everlastingness. Heart-deadening asceticism was but a natural result. But let us remember that all real self-abnegation, though it may fail of due balance from the practical and social energies, none the less truly involves the substance of practical virtue. And its upward aim surely deserves our thoughtful study, as an element of universal religion, however the mist of dreams rolled in between it and the goal it sought.

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V.

THE LAWS.

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THE LAWS OF MANU.

WHEN Vedic inspiration ceased, there came ages of organized traditional religion. To the Mantras, or Hymns of seers, succeeded the Brâhmanas, or theological homilies *about* the hymns; explanations of the sacrifices and rituals, definitions of faith, directions for efficacious use of formulas in prayer. They are the work of a priestly class, gradually formed by the development of the old patriarchal or family religion into close clans or fraternities, with distinct functions in the ritual; and dealing for the most part, naturally enough, in quite spiritless pedantry and verbiage, ringing changes on "revealed texts" with superstitious and pompous verbal commentary, after the manner of biblical functionaries everywhere. Müller has traced this traditionalism even in the latter part of the Vedic period, busily at work arranging and combining the hymns for ceremonial purposes.[1] Gradually priestly authority became elaborated in the caste-system, and expressed itself in ideals of legislation. These were based in part on natural wants of the social organization, and in part on the logic of the religious idea, as

Growth of ecclesiastical institutions.

[1] *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 456. There were more than twenty of these old clans, out of which sacerdotal families were developed.

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traditionally received, and developed by its representative class. Doubtless there were many such codes, emanating from different priestly schools and fellowships;[1] but their ecclesiastical compilers could hardly have possessed the means of imposing them upon the population of India. It is probable therefore that they were carried into practice only in so far as they really embodied popular customs and beliefs. Their development, too, must have been very slow; and many ages must have elapsed before so vast an edifice of rules and relations could have been constructed, even in theory, as we find presented, with a serene and simple absolutism, as if by universal consent of gods and men, in the Dharmaśâstra of the Mânavas, commonly called the Laws of Manu.

This serene self-assurance, in fact, rested upon public recognition. Law itself, we must remember, was originally but the mandate of religious sentiment, and the oldest legislation was everywhere *honestly* ascribed to the gods; for these ruder ages heard secret whispers of an eternal truth, on the acceptance and right following of which depends the life of the latest and freest states.

Age of the Code of Manu.

It is still undetermined at what period the theological, moral, political, and social ideal of the Brahmanical schools became embodied in this code. It has been usual, ever since its translation by Sir William Jones, in 1794,[2] to place it next in antiquity to the three oldest Vedas, as one of the few great landmarks of Hindu literature; and most Orientalists have dated it somewhere between the eighth and thirteenth centuries before the Christian

[1] Parishads and Charanas. See Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*

[2] The version here used.

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era.[1] Yet other recent scholars find the evidences of this great antiquity inadequate, and hold its date to be altogether unknown, the most eminent of these being Max Müller.

It is certain that Greek authors, from the time of Alexander, agree that Hindu courts appealed to no written codes; though Lassen may be correct in his suggestion that their references are to special occasions only, and do not prove that such written laws were not in existence. It must be allowed, too, that legislative codes depend on the current use of writing; and this cannot be traced back in India beyond the age ascribed to Buddha. True, a wonderful development of the memory supplied the place of books; and as the Vedic hymns were preserved by oral tradition alone for centuries, so, doubtless, were definite social customs and rules. But a code so elaborate as this, embodying the whole Brahmanical system in its developed form and full application to all branches of human conduct, would imply a common understanding of relations and duties for which *written* docu-

[1] This is the view of such eminent authorities as Lassen and Burnouf, as well as of Koeppen in his very thorough investigations into the history of Buddhism; and Weber's exhaustive researches into the literature of India result in the judgment that it is the oldest of the numerous Hindu Codes. The grounds of this general agreement are given by Duncker, *Geschichte d. Alterthums*, II. pp. 96, 97. The following is a summary: The oldest Buddhist Sutras describe a more developed stage of Brahmanism in many respects than this code, and must therefore have a later origin: yet they are traceable far back beyond the Christian era. It is probably cited in the Buddhist legends and in the Mahâbhârata. It is cognizant of only three Vedas, while the Buddhist Sutras are acquainted with the latest Veda also. It contains no allusion to Buddhism by name, and makes only general reference to rationalists who denied the Veda, as was in fact done by many schools previous to Buddha. It knows nothing of the worship of Śiva, familiar to Buddhist Sutras; nothing of that of Vishnu-Krishna, — its only allusion to Vishnu being in a passage of doubtful antiquity, and this after a purely Vedic manner, — nothing finally of the epic heroes, while it freely mentions kings famous in the Vedic age. Finally, its geographical knowledge extends no farther than the Vindhya Mountains, though the Aryans had conquered much of Southern India long before our era. See Lassen, I. 800; Burnouf, *Introd. à l'Hist. du Bouddhisme*, p. 133; Koeppen, I. 38; Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 242–244. Wilson, *Introd. to Rig Veda*, places it as early as the fifth century B.C.

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ments appear absolutely necessary. And the use of such documentary form for systems or ideals of jurisprudence was not likely to have been undertaken in India, until a comparatively late period; both because of the general dislike for written teachings and because all authoritative priesthoods are disinclined to limit themselves to defined and recorded rules. Such self-limitation came, doubtless, only when it could no longer be resisted, and may have been compelled by the advance of Buddhism. Yet even these considerations would not greatly diminish the supposable antiquity of the Code, at least in its main elements. That in its present form it represents a gradual growth of the Brahmanical ideas, and contains additions belonging to very different periods, is more than probable, especially from the confused and contradictory elements in its legislation. At all events, it alludes to earlier codes, whose elements are doubtless incorporated into this, the fullest and most perfect in form of all that are yet known to us.[1] Of these Indian codes, early and late, there would seem to be no end. Stenzler enumerates forty-seven law-books by different authors, besides twenty-two special revisions; the codes of Manu and Yâjnavalkya only being now practically accessible to us.[1] Most of these books, however, are metrical versions, based on older texts.

Both these codes define the extent of their territorial validity by calling themselves the "law of the land (Âryavârta) where dwells the black gazelle." It was thus admitted that a portion of the peninsula lay outside their jurisdiction. Whatever antiquity may be ascribed to Manu, or however late the origin of its

[1] Stenzler, in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 236, 237.

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present form, it is difficult to find the age when it can have had practical recognition by any large portion of the people of India. It is in fact but the Law Code of the Mânavas, one of the old Brahmanical fellowships founded on common guardianship of sacred texts, and is valuable mainly as embodying what was undoubtedly *Orthodox Brahmanism in its most vigorous age*, as well as a vast number of the recognized usages and institutions of ancient Hindu life. And there is reason for believing, in accordance with what is stated by Mr. Maine to be the opinion of the best scholars, that "it does not as a whole represent a set of rules ever actually administered in Hindustan, but is an ideal picture of what, in the view of the Brahmans, *ought* to be the Law."[1]

As further evidence of a later origin than the Brâhmanas, we may observe that the Mânava-Dharmaśâstra belongs to the class of writings defined by the orthodox Hindus as *Smriti*, or tradition, in distinction from Sruti, or revelation. It is difficult to explain this fact, except upon the supposition that a *more recent date* was ascribed to it than to the Brâhmanas, which, as we know, by reason of their antiquity were held to be verbally inspired. For it represents Manu as receiving the eternal rules of justice from Brahma himself, and as delivering them to the ten great rishis, who reverently address him as master of all divine truth.[2]

Notwithstanding this inferior position, the Brahman-

[1] *Ancient Law*, p. 16. See Sykes, *Polit. Condition of Anc. India, Journal R. As. Soc.*, 1851, VI.; *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 104. The Code of Manu is nominally the law of the Burmese empire. But we are told that every monarch alters it to suit himself, and that it is null for all practical purposes, being never produced or pleaded from in courts. Malcom, *Travels in Burmah, Notes*, IV.

[2] *Introduction to Manu.*

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ical commentators have not failed to recognize its immense value as authority in whatever relates to their traditional faith. And they labor earnestly to prove, not quite true to their bibliolatry here, that Manu's knowledge of the Vedas gave him equal claims with their authors; yet they bring the testimony of Vedic text itself, that "whatever Manu said is medicine."[1]

The Name.

Of all Institutes of Government, this, to the Brahmanical tribes, was the consummate and sacred flower. Manu signifies Thought. The word is kindred with the Latin *mens*, as also with *man*, and indicates the honor paid by the Aryan race to the intellectual nature.[2] The name thus expressive of divine intelligence revealed in the human, was applied by the Hindus to the mythical first man and first king, as to many other imaginary rishis in primeval legend.[3] The Institutes called by his name are in twelve books of metrical sentences, covering all branches of speculation and ethics, of public and private life. The first reveals a Cosmogony; the second and third regulate Education and Marriage as duties of the first and second stages of Hindu culture; the fourth treats of Economics and Morals; the fifth, of Diet and Purification, also of Women; the sixth, of Devotion, or the duties of the third and fourth stages; the seventh, of Government and the Military Class; the eighth, of Private and Criminal Law; the ninth, of the Commercial and Servile Classes; the tenth, of Mixed Classes and Regulations for Times of Distress; the

[1] See quotations in Müller, p. 89, 103.

[2] Minos of Greeks, Menes of Egyptian, Mannus of Germans, Menw of Welsh. See Pictet, II. 621–627.

[3] See *Ztschr. d. D. M. G.*, IV. 430; Müller, p. 532.

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eleventh, of Penance and Expiation; the twelfth, of Transmigration and Final Beatitude.[1]

As the basis of Brahmanical speculation is that self is nothing, and that of their ethics that self-ishness is hell, so the substance of their juris-prudence is a discipline of entire self-renunciation. The theoretic aim of the Mânavaśâstra is the utter suppression of selfish desire. It is absolute despotism; but a despotism *by* the conscience rather than over it; enslavement not of subjects by rulers, but of souls by their religious idea. Manu begins, and Yâjnavalkya ends, with reverent ascription of the Law to the Self-existent. Highest and lowest castes alike confess its terrible sanctions, present and future. Its minuteness of legislation is unequalled. If we should judge Oriental prescription by the principles we must apply among ourselves, we should say that its regulations, purifications, penances — an endless reach of absurdity — had not left the slightest loop-hole for the self-assertion of private reason or will. They are doubtless framed with special regard to the prerogative of the priesthood, as divinely appointed, and as conscious of being the intelligent and controlling class; but the legislation was law *for* the priesthood, as well as *by* it, and demanded of this class as complete self-abnegation as it exacted from the Pariah. The Brahman was fully invested with the duty of concealing its inner meaning from all but such as are worthy to receive it from his sacred lips; and an appalling secrecy repelled curiosity and

Basis in self-abnegation.

[1] The Law Code of Yâjnavalkya, probably next in the order of time to Manu, and referred by Stenzler to the period between the second and fifth centuries of our era, covers substantially the same ground with its predecessor, but with much less of detail, and in a style and diction in many respects peculiar to itself. Its speculative contents are different from those of Manu, comprising a curious treatise on the physical birth and structure of man, and a philosophy that strangely combines astrological fancies with mystical, Buddhistic, and positive tendencies. It consists of three books only, which have been translated by Stenzler (Berlin, 1849), from whose German version our extracts are taken.

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repressed ambition in the lay classes. This is their sacrifice. He has also his: to surrender himself, body, mind, and soul, to its ascetic observances; and faithfully to fulfil its minutest precepts, on penalty of dreadful transmigrations for ages. Thus a master instinct of sacrifice sweeps the whole compass of life and thought. It is because this instinct, however blind, has yet essentially noble elements, that we find even a spiritual and social thraldom like caste, though bristling with insensate ceremonies and penalties, alive with the endeavor to subdue selfish desires. We see this alike in the implacable *severity* with which sensual and brutal appetites are punished, and in the benevolence which runs in fine veins and broad arteries through the gloomy organism, forbidding wrath and revenge, binding the heart to the least of sentient creatures,[1] and in its way anticipating the tenderness of the modern poet: —

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."[2]

We see the same endeavor in the stern disciplines laid upon servants, priests, and kings, a deeper democracy of renunciation beneath the tyrannies of caste; and in the final aim of the whole to make saints whose motive shall lie in virtue, not in its rewards; whose ultimate freedom shall be to lose them-

[1] *Manu*, IV. 238, 246; VI. 40, 68.

[2] A striking instance of this mixture of superstition with tenderness to the brute world, as a discipline of self-denial, is in the penance prescribed in Manu for having chanced to kill a cow; a creature inviolably sacred for the Hindu, from his sense of her benefits to his fathers in the early nomad days. The offender "must wait for months all day on the herd, and quaff the dust raised by their hoofs; must stand when they stand, move when they move, and lie down by them when they lie down. Should a cow fall into any trouble or fear, he must relieve her; and, in whatever heat, rain, or cold, must not seek his own shelter, without having cared for the cows." *Manu*, XI. 109–116.

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selves in Deity, whose method to "shun all worldly honor as poison, and seek disrespect as nectar,"[1] "reposing in perfect content on God alone."[2] And we see it in the creed which inspires all this asceticism, and proves it to have been a living faith, not an enforced bondage: — "The resignation of all pleasures is better than the enjoyment of them."[3]

The product of Brahmanical self-renunciation was the Yogi, a creature of penances, purifications, and ascetic feats; the conventional type of heathen degradation; whom the law book itself paints as crouching at the foot of a gloomy banyan, his hairs growing over him, and his nails growing in, gazing listlessly on the tip of his nose, or moping along with his eyes fixed on the ground, lest he should unawares destroy some ant or worm; "waiting release from his body as a servant his wages," yet wishing neither life nor death, and receiving his food from others without asking it, as the due of his austerities for the public good.[4] Unpromising enough; yet the desert monks of Christendom in the fourth century were, as a class, less gentle and thoughtful, and certainly far less cleanly, than these Eastern devotees; while they drew from Christian dogma the same unnatural theory of self-abnegation which the others drew from Hindu caste. And, repulsive as he may be, the Yogi is a specimen, such as these crude social conditions could furnish, of devotion to a purely contemplative ideal. Under all the circumstances even squalid asceticism appears as a positive moral protest. For sensuality must have all the more fiercely beset the temperament of the Hindu, under

The Yogi.

[1] *Manu*, II. 162.
[2] Ibid., VI. 43, 34.
[3] Ibid., II. 95.
[4] Ibid., VI. 42, 45, 58, 68; *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 45, 62.

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hot suns, amidst a voluptuous physical nature, the more he was devoted to seclusion and meditation; and these relentless disciplines were in fact a vigorous reaction against titanic attractions in the senses. Their very name, *tapas*, signifying heat, hints of a torrid climate, in which the moral sense was finding itself severely tried. This virtue is of the passive Hindu quality, lacking self-consciousness and freedom, a divine instinct struggling against hard conditions; but how complete its command! Man shall know nothing, and be nothing, apart from the God of his ideal thought; and in finding Him all things else shall be found. Such is its law and its promise. To escape the finite dream, and the petty limit of self, and to enter into the real and eternal, as a blessed life worthy of all price, is the mystic desire into which all great religions have flowered, each in its own hour and way.

The Brahmanical poets certainly knew how to picture their wilderness-life in very attractive colors, even for the civilized mind.[1] The hermitages are described in the Râmâyana, as well as by Kâlidâsa, as surrounded by spacious lawns, well planned and scrupulously neat; frequented by antelopes, deer, and birds, creatures "taught to trust in man;" shaded by fruit-bearing trees; laved by canals, strewed with wild-flowers, and set with clear pools, where white lilies, symbols of holy living, spread their floating petals, never wet by their contact with the element beneath, to the clear sky.[1] And here the peaceable saints, husbands and wives, purified bodily by continual ablutions, and spiritually by happy meditation on sacred themes, lived amidst supernatural delights

[1] *Raghuvanśa*, B. I.; *Śakuntalâ*, Act I.

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in the society of celestial guests, and received the visits of their admirers with hospitality in their leafy huts; performing stupendous feats of asceticism without physical injury; multiplying their simple roots and herbs into splendid bouquets, large enough for armies, with resources beside which those of Hebrew and Christian miracle must, to this Oriental imagination, be hopelessly tame. Through the mythological dress, we detect an ideal which could not have failed in some degree to reconcile ascetic life with natural occupation and social good.

The active virtues.

And we, in fact, find that the active virtues are not forgotten. "All honor to the householder," says the law, "and let him faithfully fulfil his duties." "He who gives to strangers, with a view to fame, while he suffers his family to live in distress, having power to support them, touches his lips with honey, but swallows poison. Such virtue is counterfeit."[1] And the purely contemplative life was not allowable till three stages of practical activity had been passed through: the *student* life; *domestic married* life, or social service of some sort; and *anchoret* life, a kind of missionary function, to feed the forest creatures, and preach to disciples, — doubtless, like St. Francis, to the fishes and the fowls also. "Low shall he fall who applies his mind to final beatitude, before having paid the three debts, to the gods, the fathers, and the sages; read the Vedas according to law; begotten a son; and sacrificed, to the best of his power."[2] Then only "shall the twice-born man, *perceiving his muscles relaxing and his hair turning gray*, leave his wife to his sons, or else, accompanied

[1] *Manu*, XI. 9.

[2] Ibid., VI. 35.

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by her, seek refuge in a forest, with firm faith and subdued organs of sense." There he is to live, patient of extremities, a perpetual giver, benevolent towards all beings, content with roots and fruit, studying what the Vedas teach of the being and attributes of God; proving his mastery over outward things; in the hot season by adding four fires to the sun's heat; uncovered in the cold; putting on wet garments in rain; and, if incurably diseased, living on air and water till his frame decays and his soul is united with the Supreme.[1] Thus he advances to the final disciplines of a Sannyasi, whose sole employment is "to meditate on the transmigrations caused by sin and the imperishable rewards of virtue, on the subtle essence of the Supreme Spirit and its complete existence in all beings." So "his offences are burned away;" "all that is repugnant to the divine nature is extinguished;" "higher worlds are illuminated with his glory," and he is "absorbed in the divine essence."[2] Here the balance of the active and passive elements is indeed lost, since the ideal of life is contemplation alone; but both elements are at all events recognized, and the system in this respect compares very creditably with Christian asceticism, by insisting, as that has seldom or never done, on the fulfilment of practical duties as passport to contemplative repose.

Spirituality.

Far back in the ages, without doubt long before the Christian era, Hindu formalism was met by these trenchant rebukes: —

"By falsehood sacrifices become vain; by pride, devotions. By proclaiming a gift, its fruit perishes."[3]

"For whatever purpose a man shall bestow any gift, according to that purpose shall be his reward."[4]

[1] *Manu*, VI. 1–31.
[2] Ibid., VI. 62, 72, 81.
[3] Ibid., IV. 237.
[4] Ibid., 234.

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"One who voluntarily confesses his sin shall, so far, cast it off: when his heart shall loathe it, the taint then only shall pass away."[1]

"Let no man, having committed sins, perform penance, under pretext of devotion, disguising his crime under fictitious religion: such impostors, though Brahmans, are despised."[2]

"A man who performs rites only, not discharging his moral duties, falls low: let him discharge these duties, even though he be not constant in those rites."[3]

"He who governs his passions, though he know only the *Gâyatri*, or holiest text, is more to be honored than one who governs them not, though he may know the three Vedas."[4]

Though with Eastern extravagance it is said elsewhere that "sixteen suppressions of the breath, with the constant repetition of the holy syllables for a month, will absolve even the slayer of a Brahman for his hidden faults,"[5] passages like the foregoing certainly imply also that only a repentant spirit could give such efficacy to the form. So this frank confession of bibliolatry — "as a clod sinks into a great lake, so is every sinful act submerged in the triple Veda" — should be taken in connection with such precepts as the following: —

"The wise are purified by forgiveness of injuries; the negligent of duty, by liberality; they who have secret faults, by devout meditation."[6]

"Of all pure things, purity in acquiring wealth is pronounced most excellent; since he who gains this with clean hands is truly pure, not he who is purified with earth and water."[7]

"Penance brings purification for the Veda student; patience for the wise; water for the body; silent prayer for the secret sin; truth for the mind: for the soul the highest is the knowledge of God."[8]

"Let the wise consider as having the quality of darkness every act which one is ashamed of his having done, or doing, or being about to do; to that of passion, every act by which he seeks celebrity in the world; to that of goodness, every act, by which he hopes to acquire

[1] *Manu*, XI. 229–232.
[2] Ibid., IV. 198.
[3] Ibid., IV. 204.
[4] Ibid., II. 118.
[5] Ibid., XI. 249.
[6] Ibid., V. 107.
[7] Ibid., V. 106.
[8] *Yâjn.*, III. 33, 34.

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divine knowledge, which he is never ashamed of doing, or which brings placid joy to his conscience. The prime object of the foul quality is pleasure; of the passionate, worldly prosperity; of the good, virtue."[1]

"To be a hermit is not to bring forth virtue," adds Yâjnavalkya: "this comes only when it is practised. Therefore, what one would not have done to him, let him not do to others."[2]

The Spirit.

"God is Spirit," says the Christian Gospel, "and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Hear the Hindu Law:—

"O friend to virtue, that Supreme Spirit, which thou believest one with thyself, resides in thy bosom perpetually, and is an all-knowing inspector of thy virtue or thy crime."

"If thou art not at variance with that great divinity within thee, go not on pilgrimage to Gunga, nor to the plain of Curu."[3]

"The soul is its own witness, its own refuge. Offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of men."

"The wicked have said in their hearts, 'None sees us.' Yes, the gods see them, and the spirit within their own breasts."[4]

Retribution.

"The wages of sin," says the Christian Bible, "is death." Quite as distinctly says the Hindu Law:—

"The fruit of sin is not immediate, but comes like the harvest, in due season. Little by little, it eradicates the man. Its fruit, if not in himself, is in his sons or in his sons' sons."[5]

"Even here below, the unjust is not happy, nor he whose wealth comes from false witness, nor he who delights in mischief."[6]

"One grows rich for a while through unrighteousness, and vanquishes his foes; but he perishes at length from his root up."[7]

"Justice, being destroyed, will destroy; preserved, will preserve. It must therefore never be violated."[8]

"In whatever extremity, never turn to sin."[9]

[1] *Manu*, XII. 35–38.
[2] *Yâjn.*, III. 65.
[3] *Manu*, VIII 91, 92.
[4] Ibid., VIII. 84, 85.
[5] Ibid., IV. 172, 173.
[6] Ibid., IV. 170.
[7] Ibid., IV. 174.
[8] Ibid., VIII. 15.
[9] Ibid., IV. 171.

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"Let one walk in the path of good men, the path in which his fathers walked." [1]

"Vice is more dreadful by reason of its penalties than death." [2]

"Whosoever," says the New Testament, "shall break one of these commandments, is guilty of all." The Dharmaśâstra of Manu affirms the same natural law of integrity. "If one sins with one member, the sin destroys his virtue, as a single hole will let out all the water in a flask." [3]

"Let one collect virtue by degrees, as the ant builds its nest, that he may acquire a companion to the next world. The Future Life.
For, in his passage thither, his virtue only will adhere to him.

"Single is each man born; alone he dies, alone receives the reward of his doings. When he leaves his body on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces, but his virtue accompanies his soul.

"Let him gather this, therefore, to secure an inseparable companion through the gloom, how hard to be traversed!" [4]

"The only firm friend who follows man after death is justice." [5]

In order to discover what is the *substance* of this Brahmanic ideal, let us note first some of the Humanities. humanities of the Code.

"The care and pain of parents in behalf of their children cannot be repaid in a hundred years." [6]

"Reverence for age is to the young, life, knowledge, and fame." [7]

"The old, the blind, the maimed, the sick, the poor, the heavy laden, are to be treated with marked respect, even by the king." [8]

"Knowledge, virtue, age, even in a Sudra, should have respect." [9]

The diseased and deformed were avoided in sacrificial acts,[10] which concerned only what was physi-

[1] *Manu*, IV. 178.
[2] Ibid., VII. 53.
[3] Ibid., II. 99.
[4] Ibid., IV. 239–242.
[5] Ibid., VIII. 17.
[6] Ibid., II. 227.
[7] Ibid., II. 121.
[8] Ibid., II. 138; VIII. 395; *Yâjn.*, I. 117.
[9] *Yâjn.*, I. 116.
[10] *Manu*, III. 161.

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cally as well as spiritually unblemished. Yet they were "in no wise to be insulted."[1] As Homer pictures the gods going about disguised as beggars and outcasts, to try men's hearts, so, according to Manu, children, poor dependants, and the sick are to be regarded as "rulers of the ether."[2] The blind, crippled, old, and helpless are not to be taxed;[3] the deaf and dumb, the idiotic and insane, the maimed, and those who have lost the use of a limb, are indeed excluded from inheriting, but must be supported by the heir, without stint, to the best of his power.[4] On the father's death, the oldest son must support the family, and the brothers must endow their sisters.[5] The authority of the householder over his family is almost absolute; yet he must "regard his wife and son as his own body, his dependants as his shadow, his daughter with the utmost tenderness."[6] His prescribed prayer is, "that generous givers may abound in his house, that faith and study may never depart from it, and that he may have much to bestow on the needy."[7]

"A guest must not be sent away at evening: he is sent by the retiring sun; and, whether he have come in season or out of season, he must not sojourn in the house without entertainment."[8]

The sense of solidarity in social ethics is well worth noticing, as shown in passages like the following: —

"The soldier who flees and is slain shall take on himself all the sins of his commander; and the commander receive all the fruit of good conduct stored up by the other for the future life."

"A sixth of the reward for virtuous actions, due the whole people, belongs to the king who protects them: if he protects them not, a sixth of their iniquity falls on him."[9]

[1] *Manu*, IV. 141. [2] Ibid., IV. 184. [3] Ibid., VIII. 394.
[4] Ibid., IX. 202. [5] Ibid., IX. 104–118. [6] Ibid., IV. 185.
[7] Ibid., III. 259. [8] Ibid., III. 105. [9] Ibid., VII. 94; VIII. 304.

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The Brahman's decalogue not only commands content, veracity, purification, coercion of the senses, resistance to appetites, knowledge of scripture and of the Supreme Spirit, but abstinence from illicit gain, avoidance of wrath, and the return of good for evil.[1] Forced contracts are declared void.[2] Transfer of property must be made in writing.[3] Royal gifts are to be recorded on permanent tablets.[4] There are laws against slander, peculation, intemperance, and dealing in ardent spirits; laws punishing iniquitous judgments, false witness, and unjust imprisonment; laws providing for the annulment and revision of unrighteous decrees; enforcing the sacredness of pledges and the fulfilment of trusts; justly dividing the responsibilities of partners; dealing severely with conspiracies to raise prices to the injury of laborers; laws which either forbid gambling altogether, or discourage it by regulative drawbacks; laws declaring persons reduced to slavery by violence free, as well as the slave who has saved his master's life, or who purchases his own freedom.[5] Penalty becomes merciless in dealing with crimes which involve the greatest mischief, such as arson, counterfeiting coin, and selling poisonous meat.[6] Ethics.

The king shall "never transgress justice." "It is the essence of majesty, protector of all created things, and eradicates his whole race," if he swerves from duty.[7] "He shall forgive those who abuse him in their pain: if through pride he will not excuse them, he shall go to his torment."[8]

[1] *Manu*, VI. 91. [2] Ibid., VIII. 168; *Yâjn.*, II. 89.
[3] *Yâjn.*, II. 84. [4] Ibid., I. 317, 318.
[5] Ibid., III. 285; II. 270; *Manu*, IX. 221; *Yâjn.*, II. 4, 82, 243; 31, 305; 58, 164, 249, 259; *Manu*, VIII. 211, 230–233; *Yâjn.*, II. 199, 182.
[6] *Yâjn.*, II. 282, 297. [7] *Manu*, VII. 13, 14, 28. [8] Ibid., VIII. 313.

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"A king," says Yâjnavalkya, "should be very patient, experienced, generous, mindful of services rendered, respectful to the old, modest, firm, truthful, acquainted with the laws, not censorious, nor of loose habits, nor low inclination, able to hide his weak points, wise in reasoning and in criminal law, in the art of procuring a livelihood, and in the three Vedas."

"Higher than all gifts is the protection of his subjects."

"The fire that ascends from the people's sufferings is not extinguished till it has consumed their king, his fortune, family, life."[1]

"What he has not, let a king seek to attain honestly; what he has, to guard with care; what he guards, to increase; and what is increase let him give to those who deserve it."[1]

He shall be "a father of his people."[2] He should make war only for the protection of his dominions; must respect the religion, laws, and even the fears, of the conquered.[3] Punishment by military force must be his last resort.[4]

The warrior, "remembering what is due to honor," shall not shoot with poisoned arrows, nor strike the weary, the suppliant, the non-combatant, the sleeping, the severely wounded, the fugitive, the disarmed, nor one already engaged with an opponent, nor one who yields himself captive.[5] Civilization has added nothing to these humanities of military chivalry. To sum all, "let not injustice be done in deed or in thought, nor a word be uttered that shall cause a fellow-creature pain: it will bar one's progress to final bliss."[6] "He who has caused no fear to the smallest creature shall have no cause for fear when he dies."[7]

Moral sanctions.

It may not be easy to comprehend the idea of justice which mingled with such precepts as these the cruelties of caste legislation. Yet do not such incompatibilities proceed side by side in the

[1] *Yâjn.*, I. 308–310, 334, 340, 316
[2] *Manu*, VII. 80; *Yâjn.*, I. 333.
[3] *Manu*, VII. 168, 170, 201, 203.
[4] Ibid., VII. 108; *Yâjn.*, I. 345.
[5] *Manu*, VII 90–93; *Yâjn.*, I. 325.
[6] *Manu*, II. 161
[7] *Manu*, VI. 40.

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laws, theologies, and bibles of all races? For the State as such, the reconciliation of law with love, of government with noble instinct, as yet lies in the future. — We notice that self-interest is suggested as motive for benevolence. This sanction is constantly appealed to in the New Testament also, and even in the Beatitudes of Jesus. But it would be irrational to make this a ground for ascribing such delicacy of affection as appears in both Hindu and Hebrew ethics to any other primary cause than noble and humane feeling. Laws may suggest interested motives, and they *must* appeal to sanctions. But *Law itself* springs from the natural instincts of love and care, as well as from social dangers. And so the eternal piety of the heart had its large share in the oldest legislation.

Self-respect.

With what decision a natural self-respect breaks forth through the slavery of abnegation, the despotism of custom and law, in such precepts of an older stoicism as these: —

"One must not despise himself for previous failures: let him pursue fortune till death, nor ever think it hard to be attained." [1]

"Success depends on destiny and on conduct: the wise expect it from the union of these; as a car goes not on a single wheel, so without one's own action the fated is not brought to pass." [2]

"All that depends on one's self gives pleasure: all that depends on another, pain." [3]

"The habit of taking gifts causes the divine light to fade." [4]

"A believer may receive pure knowledge even from a sudra: and a lesson in the highest virtue even from a chandala; and a woman bright as a gem even from the basest family. Even from poison may nectar be taken; from a child, gentleness of speech; even from a foe, prudent counsel; even from an impure substance, gold." [5]

[1] *Manu*, IV. 137. [2] *Yâjn.*, I. 348–350.
[3] *Manu*, IV. 160. [4] Ibid., IV. 186. [5] Ibid., II. 238, 239.

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Nature of Oriental codes: their right interpretation.

It may be asked how much of all this preaching was reduced to practice? It is doubtless true, as we have said, that Oriental Codes express rather the aspirations and convictions of the classes from which they spring, than actual rules of civil and political conduct. They are vast repositories of national life, of individual ideals, philosophical systems, customs and traditions more or less sacred, laws more or less recognized and carried out. They have also an imaginative form, deal in the superlative and boundless, and must not be too literally interpreted. These considerations apply alike to their good and evil; and we must guard alike against over-censure and over-praise. But this much may be said. The Greeks who travelled in India centuries before the Christian era were enthusiastic in their admiration of Hindu morals. They told of kings spending the whole day in the administration of justice, of the honesty of traders, and the general dislike of litigation; of the infrequency of theft, though houses were left open without bolts or bars; and of the custom of loaning money without seals or witnesses. They praised the truthfulness of the men and the chastity of the women.[1] Whatever deduction must be made from these testimonies for exaggeration and mistakes, they are not without their value.

The substance of the testimony.

But for us the main import of such precepts is that the human soul recognized the nobility of truth, justice, and love through its own resources, and bore witness to the universality of its own inspiration. There they stand written in their old Sanskrit, or "beautiful speech" as the Hindu called it, pointing back to how much older times than such

[1] Arrian, Strabo. See also Duncker, II. 283–287.

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writing we cannot tell. And to affirm, in the exclusive interest of the Christian, or any other "dispensation," that they were not deeply felt and bravely lived by men and women even then, were indeed

> "To sound God's sea with earthly plummet,
> To find a bottom still of worthless clay."

The barbarities of this legislation — and they are many and dark — do not disprove our conclusions. In all times and civilizations, verities stand side by side with falsities; and barbarous laws and customs contradict the best theoretic claims of states. The better moments of a people's life record their natural capacities for good; and of these their unjust or cruel traditions of law must not be taken as the measure. Would it be fair in some future historian to assert that the American conscience had no better ideal of freedom down to the year 1865 than a slavery basis of representation and a Fugitive Slave Law? It would certainly be more just to say that American history had been throughout, the struggle of the two opposing ideas, Liberty and Slavery, each existing potentially in the consciousness of the age and people, and more or less apprehended by individuals; and that the laws, so far from showing the stage at which this personal light or darkness had arrived, as a definite point, gave merely the general resultants of the strife with long established and instituted wrong. If then the barbarities of the Hindu Codes were even crimes like those of mature civilization, instead of being, as they to a great extent are, results of childish fears and superstitions, they would still prove nothing against other evidences that a high sense of ethical truth stood side by side with them in the Hindu mind.

The darker side.

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How interpreted and explained.

In fairness we must note that the beginnings, even of customs which the advance of practical intelligence stamps as enormities, are to be found in half-conscious instincts, by no means discreditable to human nature. And the legislation we condemn was perhaps the effort actually to modify and control their mis-growth. Whoever the earlier legislators may have been, they were obliged to make the best of existing institutions. What to us are defects in their codes may have been timely reforms and remedial restraints. Solon's laws gave political functions according to wealth; thus continuing, to a degree, the old exclusion of the people as a whole from office. But he was thereby enabled to lift them from a yet more abject position, and to procure them, in compensation for such defects, their archons and general assembly, — powerful checks on the aristocratic party. Another arbitrary decree of this great Athenian cancelled just debts, and debased the currency. Yet it delivered the poor from burdens which they could no longer bear, freed them from personal seizure for debt, and produced an abiding respect for the force of contracts.[1] "I made the land and the people free," he said; and Aristotle reaffirms this claim on his behalf. Portions of the Mosaic legislation concerning the Canaanite races, that seem to the last degree cruel and barbarian, were really a limitation to the treatment of certain most dangerous enemies alone, of usages previously applied to enemies as such.[2] Traces of similar efforts at mitigation are observable in many severities of the Hindu Code.

The better impulses in which many persistent forms of law, now seen to be inhuman, originated in rude

[1] Grote, III. 105.

[2] Deut. xx. 10–18.

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ages, have seldom been recognized by historical inquirers, and scarcely enter into the estimate of heathenism by the Christian world in general.

The elder races, for example, were fully and intensely convinced of the nature of moral evil and the certainty of moral retributions. They were, on the other hand, ignorant of the invariableness of natural laws. These two conditions led inevitably to the use of the *Ordeal*, as a means of testing guilt by an appeal to divine interposition. It was simply an effort to find decisions of justice in the ill-understood operations of physical nature; to prove that the elements were under moral sovereignty. The Sanskrit words for ordeal signify "faith" and "divine test." "The fire singed not a hair of the sage Vatsa, by reason of his perfect veracity."[1] Nature is pledged, in other words, to deal justly, when appealed to. Can Christians tell us why a miracle should not be wrought to save a truthful Vatsa, as well as to punish a lying Ananias; or why fire and water should not discriminate between the saint and the sinner in the old Hindu courts as well as in the cases of modern reprobates recorded in the "manuals" as drowned or struck by lightning for violating the Christian Sabbath? But there *is* in fact a great difference. For while it may have indicated not a little faith and courage, in races ignorant of physical laws, to believe that Nature was subordinate to justice, and to trust its cause to her defence, it seems to imply something very unlike either of these qualities to renounce the light of a scientific age in the name of religion, and persistently to cling to the superstitions of an ignorant one.

The Ordeal.

Manu knows only ordeals by fire and water, or by

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 116.

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touching the heads of one's wife and children with invocations thereon. Other codes add tests by poison and by various processes, — for example, by being weighed twice in scales, drinking consecrated water, touching hot iron with the tongue. In the trial by carrying a red-hot bar for seven paces, however, leaves were to be wrapped round the hand; in that by remaining a certain time under water, the legs of another could be clasped. The seasons of the year for employing the different forms of ordeal were determined with a certain regard to the interests of those who were to undergo them. Women, children, the old, the sick, and the weak were not to be subjected to ordeals by fire, water, or poison, but by the scales only.[1] Yâjnavalkya implies that they were not to be used except in cases of great moment.[2]

The ordeal cannot be called the special barbarism of any one race or religion, though it appears never to have existed in China. The Arab, the Japanese, the wild African, alike defer to its authority.[3] The Hebrew husband had his "bitter water of jealousy." And the historian of the Christian Church tells us that she "took the ordeal under her especial sanction," sprinkled its red-hot iron with her holy water, and enacted its cruelties with solemn rituals within her temples.[4] Down to the twelfth century, it "afforded the means of awing the laity, by rendering the priest a special instrument of Divine justice, into whose hands every man felt that he was liable at any moment to fall."[5] And its final abolition was due

[1] For a summary of these laws, see Stenzler, in *Zeitsch. d. D. M. G.*, IX. 661–682; *Manu*, VIII. 115; *Asiat. Res.*, I. 389.

[2] *Yâjn.*, II. 95. See Stenzler's *Introduction*, p. vii.

[3] See Pictet, II. 457, 458. [4] Milman, *Lat. Christianity*, III. v.

[5] Lea's *Superstition and Force*, p. 271.

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quite as much to the revival of the old Roman law and the rise of the free communes as to the repentance of the Church.

Personal deformities and diseases are regarded in Manu as the consequences of sin in the present or in a previous life. And the law classifies them according to the sins from which they proceed. In one passage it declares that the victims are to be despised;[1] excluding some of them too from the Śrâddha, or feast in honor of the dead.[2] And this superstition is as wide-spread as the ordeal; it has, like that, infected the Jew and the Christian, and had a similar origin in the effort to comprehend the mystery of physical evil under a moral law. — The instinctive presumption that it becomes the material world to show allegiance to the moral, is of course, while growing up among ignorant races, the source of a superstitious expectation of miracles. But we must not forget that it is this very instinct to whose development by science we owe the abolition of every ground for believing or demanding miracles; its ultimate form being the conviction that natural laws are themselves the desired expressions of universal good.

Treatment of physical defects.

The contempt which Hindu law prescribes towards the physically deformed and diseased is limited within strictly defined lines of conduct; and this legislation is evidently an endeavor to modify and restrain, as well as to respect, the crude instinct that physical evil is a punishment for sin. The unfortunate were not to be despised as such. They were to be treated kindly and even with respect.[3] They were exempted from public burdens; and although avoided in the act of sacrifice as being

Attitude towards deformity and disease.

[1] *Manu*, XI. 48, 53. [2] Ibid., III. 150. [3] *Yâjn.*, II. 204.

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blemished, and in the choice of partners for life, probably for physiological reasons, yet they were not to be expelled from society; and, after prescribed rites, could freely associate with other people.

Eye for eye.

There are also sanguinary punishments on the principle of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." And these are made most repulsive by their connection with the enormous inequalities of caste. This principle, cruel as it seems, forms the basis of all first essays at abstract and ideal justice in the requital of crime. Some of the severest penalties are left to the criminal's own execution, as if falling back on a supposed spontaneous recognition of their rightfulness in his own mind.[1] And their barbarity cannot be explained on any theory that leaves out of view the fact that their makers had at least an intense abhorrence of the crimes they punished. Adulterers must burn on a bed of red-hot iron. Thieves were to lose the limbs with which they effected the theft.[2] "Wherewithal a man hath sinned, with the same let him be punished," recommended itself to these unflinching judges as the maxim of natural right. It was but following out the stern hint of nature in its retributions of sensual excesses.

Sympathies of the law.

But the law knew how to provide compensations for all endurance of its barbarities. As if dissatisfied with them, and looking upwards for a way out of these bonds of judgment, it says: "Men who have committed offences, and received from kings the punishment due them, go pure to heaven, and become as clear as those who have done well."[3] A similar reaction against the severity of statutes was

[1] *Manu*, XI. 100, 104. Suicide is one of the commonest forms of penalty in the East.
[2] Ibid., VIII. 372, 334.
[3] Ibid., VIII. 318.

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naturally to be expected in the case of false witness, in view of the tremendous penalties which were attached to this crime, both for the present and the future life. And this presumption may help explain the exceptional fact that falsehood is expressly allowed, wherever the death of a person of any caste, who has sinned inadvertently, would be caused by giving true evidence in the courts.[1] It would seem as if the affections sought to assert their precedence, in such extreme cases of the conflict of duties, to the demands of literal fact. In the same way we may account for the singular scale of fines and forfeits in commutation of penalties, based, by a crude sense of natural justice, on the principle of eye for eye and life for life. They are not a mere money measure of crime, but the modification of a harsh *lex talionis* under the influence of the humane sentiments.

This relenting indicates the natural character of the Hindus better than the barbarism of the legislation in detail. It is not to be believed that the punishments by branding and mutilation, the expiations by self-torture and suicide, even for minor crimes, were carried out with any thing like the precision of our western conformity to written law.[2] There is so much contradiction between different texts, both in spirit and in letter, so much manifest exaggeration, such frequent confusion of law with ethics, and such difficulty of distinguishing between dogmatic statement and positive command, that this natural inference from the general

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 104; *Yâjn.*, II. 83.

[2] The very great disregard of legal prohibition concerning the use of animal food and the destruction of animal life, by the Brahmans, is described in Heber's *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 379.

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character of the race is not set aside by the text of the Law Book itself.[1]

Infanticide and Suttee.

Even the history of infanticide and of sati bears witness to this natural gentleness of Hindu character. No traces of these customs are found in the Rig Veda, in Manu, or in Yâjnavalkya. They are a later growth, partly of tropical enervation, partly of social misery. But nobler elements[2] also were involved in the widow's desire to follow her lost husband; and female infanticide was due to the marriage custom of giving a costly dowry with the bride.[3] Both these barbarities were abandoned at the earliest opportunity afforded by European influence.[4] Their rapid extinction in British India was mainly the work of the native chiefs themselves, under the persuasion of men like Ludlow, Macpherson, and Campbell.[4] Even before British interference, many of these chiefs had endeavored to control them by their own unaided efforts. The natives now generally regard the river sacrifices of children as disgraceful; and sati, since its abolition, is seldom spoken of but with condemnation.[5]

Free treatment of the laws in later times.

Later pandits have not hesitated to rule out such regulations from the old laws as did not seem suitable to their times, upon the ground that they were established for a less advanced age of the world. In the progress of the Hindus came

[1] It has been acutely observed (*La Cité Antique*, chap. xi.) that "the principle of the divine origin of laws in the older codes made it impossible for their subjects definitely to abrogate them." And so the old statutes remained side by side with later ones of a different and often humaner tenor. In this way we may partially explain the contradictions with which these codes abound; though, as we shall see, the rule was not without its exceptions, even in the remote East.

[2] See chapter on Rig Veda, p. 140.

[3] Elliott's *N. W. India*, I. 250.

[4] Ludlow's *British India*, II. 138, 149, 151.

[5] Ludlow, II. 149; Buyers's *Recoll. of N. India*, 132, 235; Allen, p. 418.

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denunciation of many ancient customs. "Among these," says Mr. Wheeler, "may be mentioned the sacrifice of a bull, a horse, or a man; the appointment of a man to become the father of a son by the widow of a deceased brother or kinsman; the slaughter of cattle at the entertainment of a guest; and the use of flesh meat at the celebrated feasts of the dead, still performed under the name of srâddhas."

Superstitious self-abnegation. Its lesson.

It is not so much a spirit of cruelty that darkens the pages of this Code as an insatiate self-abnegation, which in many respects is a kind of suicide. And, for full answer to all justification of human nature under these aspects, it may seem sufficient to point to their consequences. "Here," it may be said, "is the end of Hindu virtue; here, in Jagannâth and his car of human slaughter, in Kâli with her sword of human sacrifice, in Mahâdeva with his collar of sculls." These deities have been greatly belied.[1] The Hindus certainly became sensualized, — from causes easy to trace. If, however, we should accept the facts as condemnatory of human nature, we must admit that Christianity does not reinstate it, since this religion fell into similar degeneracy, and since its theology still retains this dreadful destructiveness in an ideal form. The records of Christian superstition are more dismal than those of Brahmanical. The fanaticism of the Donatist and the human sacrifice of the Hindu are of kindred nature. It has been well said, that "England and France have pages in their religious history that ought to cause them to be silent, or else to

[1] "Instances of victims throwing themselves under the wheels of Jagannâth have always been rare, and are now unknown. Nothing could be more opposed to the spirit of Vishnu-worship than self-immolation." (Hunter's *Orissa*, p. 134.) The great mortality among the pilgrims to this shrine is in fact due to neglect of sanitary conditions. The symbols of destruction in figures of the other deities referred to have more relation to spirits of evil, or to death as such, than to human sacrifice, which has always been infrequent.

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bring their charges of cruelty against Hindu rites with some humility." It has been computed that several millions of persons have been burnt as heretics, sorcerers, and witches, in Europe, during the period of Christianity. In Cadiz and Seville alone the Inquisitors burned two thousand Jews in a single year (1481).[1] It is not desirable to dwell much on this aspect of the subject. But why should all these dark pictures combined make us sceptical concerning the spiritual faculties of man? The self-tortures and the dismal fanaticisms that reach through the long history of his beliefs are not there to prove his moral incapacity: they even teach the very opposite. They are birth-throes, blind and bitter indeed, but none the less genuine, of his divinity. Let us face the worst. There is the Yogi, crawling in agonizing postures from one end of India to the other, or sitting whole days between scorching fires and gazing at the sun with seared eyeballs and bursting brain. There is the Shaman cutting himself with knives, the Moloch worshipper passing his children through flames, the Aztec piercing himself with aloe thorns and tearing out the hearts of his kinsmen on the reeking teocalli. There are Stylites on their columns, Flagellants beating themselves through the streets of Christian Europe, and all the mad penances and savage suicides of the Desert Monks. And there is Jesuit Loyola with girdle of briers and merciless iron whip; his followers giving themselves "as a corpse" into the hands of "Grand Masters," to be used at their absolute will; — dismal and dreadful incentives to a contempt of human nature, that almost start the doubt whether its origin be not from some demoniacal Power, doomed to self-annihilation. But

[1] Jost, *Gesch. d. Judenthums*, III. 110.

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other scenes are at command, and to these you hasten that you may recover your respect for life. You turn to Christian saints dying serenely on the rack and at the stake; to the great martyrs of the world's later day, witnesses for truth, liberty, and love; and stand at last reverently on Calvary before the consummate sacrifice to which you ascribe all this majesty of the soul. You seem to have passed from death to life. "There," you say, "man was on the brute's level: here he becomes a God. A new nature has surely descended on him." But that is impossible, and as needless as it is impossible. You have done injustice to the soul. Can we not read between these dark lines, and discern that the endurance for errors, however dismal and demoniacal, and the endurance for truths, however benignant and divine, have one point in common, and that of utmost significance? Do they not at least assure us that *man will suffer* all things for what he believes true and sacred? It is not mere superstitious terror that makes martyrs even to superstitions. Fear does not explain these extremities of self-sacrifice, these mournful self-crucifixions, — but something that masters fear. They hint of aspiration, they cry for light, they assure progress. They are impossible without a sentiment of awe before duty, and a vision of triumph beyond pain. They are signs, even they, that man has in his very substance, assurance of those spiritual dignities which he has been believed to owe to some supernatural change, or some all-creative element, introduced by Christian and Jewish revelation alone.

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VI.

WOMAN.

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WOMAN.

THE Dharmaśâstras are unquestionably no wiser on the nature of woman than the Law of Moses, or the mythologists of Adam's Fall. Manu is as positive as the Christian Apostle was, and as the Christian world in general has been hitherto, that man is her appointed head, and that her prerogative is to obey. This theory of the sexes, in spite of age and Scripture, is rapidly vanishing, with all analogous pretensions that "might makes right." And it is of less import now to discuss its evils in this or that form of society than it is to note the remedial forces in human nature which mitigated those evils, even in times when the relative "might" of man was in most respects much greater than it is now.

Spirit of Hindu legislation.

The general status of woman in the East is given in the declarations of the Law books, that she is "unfit by nature for independence," and "must never seek it;" that "she is never to do any thing for her own pleasure alone;" that "a wife assumes the very qualities of her husband, as a river is lost in the sea."[1] This is our precious modern principle of "feme covert" in its purest essence! — The widow must give herself up to austerities and remain unmarried,

[1] *Manu*, V. 147, 148; IX. 3, 22; *Yâjn.*, I. 85. The old Roman Law was similar. See Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire Romain*, p. 279.

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preparing for reunion in the next life;[1] while the husband could, and should, marry again.[2] As the Hebrew law allowed husbands to put away their wives on the plea of mere "uncleanness," so the Hindu made mere "unkindness," as well as barrenness or disease, sufficient ground for supersedure; while it exhorted the woman on her part, on pain of bestial transmigrations, to revere even the basest husband as a god.[3] The Brahman in later times, like the Hebrew patriarch, might by law have several wives, though of different castes, having claims to preference according to the order of their classes; and neither his wife, child, nor slave, could hold any thing as absolute property. He could take every thing from either of them or from all.[4] This was an incident, affecting them all alike, of the old system of patriarchal authority. The custom of polyandry, or possession of one wife by several husbands, was also prevalent during the Middle Ages of Hindu history; originating partly in the necessity of male offspring, as ground of religious hopes as well as source of physical support.[5]

This was the theory, — easily matched, we may remark, in Western ideas and institutions, even of recent time. But let us observe the counteractions provided by human nature to its worst effects.

[1] *Manu*, V. 157–162. [2] Ibid., V. 167–169; *Yâjn.*, I. 89.

[3] *Deut.* xxiv. 1; *Manu*, IX. 81; V. 154; *Yâjn.*, I. 77.

[4] *Manu*, IX. 85; VIII. 416. "A woman's property taken by her husband in distress, or for performance of a duty, he need not restore her." (*Yâjn.*, II. 147.) Yet this does not involve the right to violate other laws, which are very stringent in protection of the property rights of woman. (*Manu*, III. 52. Macnaghten, p. 43.) The language in the text is perhaps too strong. Wilson tells us (*Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, III. 17, 28) that a widow in India was, by the older laws, free to do as she would with her property; but in later times efforts were made to deprive her of this right. "At present, in Bengal," he adds, "a woman is acknowledged by all to be mistress of her own wealth."

[5] The same necessity explains the custom universal among savage tribes, and even practised by more advanced ones, like the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin, of capturing wives, and dividing them among the captors; a custom which tended of course to ensure other qualities of bondage, in the permanent status of woman under ancient laws.

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Woman was secured against total enslavement in rude times by the operation of two causes. She was involuntarily recognized by man as bringing his spiritual deliverance, and as appealing to his physical power for protection.

Natural defences of woman.

Of these recognitions, the former was due to her procreative function. In early times a man depended for safety, for help, and for honor, on the number of his children. The patriarch's sons were his strength. "The estimation of an Egyptian," says Herodotus, "was, next to valor in the field, in proportion to the number of his offspring."[1] To this day, the prayer of the laborer in the Nile Valley is for many children, to aid him in his toil. They were men's hold on the life beyond death. "Children," says the Greek poet,

Religious furtherance.

> "Are for the dead the saviors of fame;
> Even as corks buoy up the net on the sea,
> Upholding its twisted cord from the abyss beneath."[2]

The mysterious principle of life, as transmitted by the seed of man, is the earliest object of veneration by tribes that have risen above the condition of Fetichism. As essence of the family bond, it is the centre of patriarchal religion, and embodied in that demand for male offspring, which determined the early institutions of the principal races of Europe and Asia. Greek and Roman law watched for ages over the preservation of the family lines through male offspring, as the ground-work of religious rite and tradition. It is easy to explain the fact that interests of this nature were so excessively developed among the Hindus. In the first male child centred the religious relations with

[1] *Herod.*, I. 136. [2] Æschyl., *Choëphori*, 497.

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past and future. A male child has always been the primal necessity for the Oriental man. Through a son he pays his progenitors the debt for the gift of his own life, which is held the most sacred of all dues, and assures himself of the like payment from posterity.[1] The happiness of his ancestors was believed by the Hindu to depend on the performance of memorial rites in their honor by an uninterrupted line of male descendants. For was it not through a son that his own existence became a part of that continuous line of generations, which was probably the first and simplest sign to man of his own immortality? The laws declare that "by a son one obtains victory, by a son's son immortality, by a great-grandson reaches the solar heaven."[2] "By a son he overcomes the great darkness (of death): this the ship to bear him across. There is no life to him who has no son."[3] Kâlidâsa pictures the joy of a king in the birth of a male child, as resembling that which is felt by the Supreme, at the thought that Vishnu, as manifesting His own substance, is a guarantee of the stability of His Universe.[4] The Upanishads record the tender forms by which a father at the point of death transfers his whole being to his son.[5] The very word for son (*putra*) means deliverer from the hell called *pût*. In the Mahâbhârata, a saint has a vision, in which he sees his ancestors descending into this limbo, heads downwards, in consequence of the extinction of their male line of descendants in him. The laws of the Greeks and Romans prescribed adoption to the father who had no son, as his sacred duty to his own line.[6]

[1] *Manu*, IX. 106, 107.
[2] *Manu*, IX. 137.
[3] *Aitereya Brâhmana*. Roth, in Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, I. 458.
[4] *Raghuvanśa*, III.
[5] Kaushitaki Upan. (Weber, I. 409).
[6] See references in *La Cité Antique*, I. ch. iv.

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Here then was man exalting his stronger sex to heaven, finding therein, as Christianity did afterwards, in the "well-beloved Son," the ground of his salvation. But even to this end the wife and mother was by nature, after all, the sole and sacred path. The gods said to man concerning woman: "In her you shall be born again." "The husband," as Manu expresses it, "becomes himself an embryo, and is born a second time."[1] And so marriage became of necessity a sacrament, invested with the sanctions of conscience and piety. Nature enforced, in behalf of woman, the respect that seemed likely to be refused. "Since immortality and heaven come through descendants," says Yâjnavalkya, "therefore preserve and honor woman."[2]

So Manu:—

"A man is perfect when he consists of three, his wife, himself, and his son."[3]

"A wife secures bliss to the manes of his ancestors and to himself."

"She is as the goddess of abundance, and irradiates his dwelling."[4]

Hence the great simplicity and purity of marriage in the Vedic times, — a more equal and just relation by far than in those of Manu; though nothing in the recorded marriage rites of later times indicates other than mutual respect and unity of interests.[5] Through this religious motive, it must have been that polyandry was got rid of;[6] and even the polygamy of still more

[1] *Manu*, IX. 8; *Yâjn.*, I. 56.
[2] *Yâjn.*, I. 78.
[3] *Manu*, IX. 45.
[4] Ibid., IX. 28, 26.
[5] See full accounts of the marriage rites of the Hindus according to the later Vedas, in Weber's *Indische Studien*, vol. v.
[6] This custom still exists in some parts of India, as among the Nairs, and is ascribed by Mr. Justice Campbell to the modification of that widely spread custom among the Hindus, of a wife passing on the death of her husband to his brother: "This successive

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recent ages was much modified by it, being made rather a last resort where the religious end of marriage could not otherwise be attained, than a means of gratifying loose and lawless desires. Polygamy came in fact to be prohibited except for such causes as are expressly declared just grounds for dissolving the marriage contract, among which long continued barrenness naturally was the chief.[1] Again, as with the Hebrews, the necessity of securing male offspring led to the transference of the wife by her husband to a near relative, or *sapinda*, for the purpose; but the religious motive of the act led also to the most solemn precautions lest this infringement should be abused for sensual purposes.[2]

These are a few of the legal defences that inured to woman as the recognized way of immortality to him whose mere brute strength, uncontrolled by such motives, would have made her his slave. But they give only a faint idea of that fine compensation which nature must have lent her weakness, through her hold upon man's dearest hopes.

Physical dependence.

And as her procreative function enlisted on her behalf his religious aspirations, so her physical inferiority appealed in rude times to his generosity and tenderness. The laws of Manu had the grace to put that lifelong dependence to which they consigned her on the ground of protection.[3]

holding being here transformed into a *joint contemporaneous* holding," where the great object, that of obtaining children, could not otherwise be secured. — *Ethnology of India*, p. 135. As to the influence of this belief on marriage relations, see Ditandy, *Poésie Indienne*, p. 137.

[1] Macnaghten, 60.

[2] *Manu*, IX. 59, 60; *Yâjn.*, I. 67, 68.

[3] *Manu*, I., IX. 3. In rude and ill-governed states of society, even polygamy was plainly in many respects a safeguard, assigning female captives, for example, to a recognized status, under the care of a husband, and in the partial management of a household. Manu's sedulous instructions to the husband, in the art of protecting his wife by employing her "in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purifications and female duty, in the prepara-

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And a regard to her helplessness runs through the special provisions on those matters in which she was liable to be oppressed. On certain grounds, even "for bearing only female children,"[1] a wife might be superseded; but "not a beloved and virtuous wife," who must never be set aside without her consent.[2] A superseded wife is entitled to a sufficient maintenance in all cases whatever. "It is a crime to leave her without support."[3] Unmarried daughters inherit their mother's estate equally with sons.[4] So in general, though the wife's *peculium*, or special property, made up of six different kinds of gifts, and pronounced positively hers, could nevertheless be used by the husband in case of distress;[5] yet a special provision consigns to torment male relations who take unjust possession of a woman's property.[6] A wife could not be held liable for the debts of a husband or a son.[7] A good wife is to be faithfully supported by her husband, *though married against his inclination*, from religious duty.[8] A father is forbidden to tacitly sell his daughter by taking a gratuity for giving her in marriage;[9] and the son is charged to protect his mother after the death of her husband.[10] Insanity in a husband, impotence, and extreme vice, are held

tion of daily food and the superintendence of household utensils" (ix. 11), are evidently dictated by the fear of trusting her to her own dispositions, which are regarded as her most dangerous enemies. This diligent protection and preservation of the wife from vice, which is made so essential a part of his own salvation, savors of a complacency which might have been rebuked, had woman had the making of the laws. Yet, as things were, it must have proceeded from his judgment as to her special needs, and doubtless expressed a real sense of her physical weakness and exposure to rude assaults. For instance, the law commands him, "if he have business abroad, to assure a fit maintenance to his wife while away; for even if a wife be virtuous, she may be tempted to act amiss, if distressed for want of subsistence" (ix. 74).

[1] *Yâjn.*, I. 73. [2] *Manu*, IX. 81, 82. [3] *Yâjn.*, I. 74.
[4] Macnaghten, 61; *Yâjn.*, II. 117; *Manu*, IX. 192. [5] Macnaghten, 44.
[6] *Manu*, III. 52. [7] *Yâjn.*, II. 46. [8] *Manu*, IX. 95.
[9] Ibid., IX. 100. [10] Ibid., IX. 4.

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sufficient excuse for aversion on the part of the wife; which must not be punished by desertion nor deprivation of her property.[1]

And this regard for the weakness of woman could not fail to lead to a certain appreciation of her true strength. Thus, as we have just noted, it is upon her need of protection that Manu bases not only a perpetual wardship, but a most vigilant system of restrictions and occupations, to preserve her from the perils to which her "natural frailty" was presumed to expose her. But the injunctions to these end in what for this presumption is decidedly a fatal admission; namely, that those women only are truly secure "who are protected by their own good inclinations."[2] So Râma says, "No enclosing walls can screen a woman. Only her virtue protects her."[3]

Domestic oppression overstated.

In fact, a far greater amount of domestic tyranny has been presumed, by those who regard only the letter of the law, than the facts will warrant. The seclusion of females which prevails in India, for example, has been regarded as forming part of a despotic system. But it is probably due to other causes, in the main, than marital jealousy and distrust. The Brahmans maintain that it is of Mohammedan origin, and was adopted by the Hindus merely in self-defence against foreign brutality.[4] With both Moslem and Hindu, it may have had its origin in modest reserve; in that instinctive reverence which penetrates the whole life of Eastern races, and passing in the course of ages, like every thing Oriental, into a rigid etiquette.[5] The use of the veil by

[1] *Manu*, IX. 79. [2] Ibid., IX. 12. [3] *Râmâyana.*
[4] Wilson, *Theatre of the Hindus*, Introd., xliii.; Buyers, *Recollect. of India*, p. 401.
[5] De Vere, *Pictur. Sketches of Greece and Turkey*, p. 270.

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Persian females seems to have been derived from times when it was regarded as a sign of dignity and social elevation.[1] A Buddhist legend illustrates the relation of this religion to democratic reform on the subject. The wife of Buddha, it is said, rejected the veil, against the wishes of the court, immediately after her marriage, saying: "Good women need veiling no more than the sun and moon. The gods know my thoughts, my manners, my qualities, my modesty. Why then should I veil my face?"[2] It would appear, too, that, in spite of their seclusion, the women of the upper classes exercise as much influence in family affairs as among Europeans.[3] In the Hindu epics, women are described as entirely independent in their intercourse and movement, travelling where they will, and showing themselves freely in public, and unveiled.[4] Married women, especially, were perfectly free in India in their social intercourse with the other sex;[5] and Śakuntalâ, in the drama, pleads her own cause at the court of King Dushyanta, and even boldly rebukes him.

But these hints of the compensative forces of nature in behalf of woman lead us still farther. Here were circumstances scarcely suited to demonstrate her finer spiritual gifts. Yet Hindu law and literature abound in proofs that woman did then, as she now does, compel recognition of these gifts; although it may have been shown then, as it has since been, more by the service of the lips than by the conduct of life. Recognition of woman.

The ages we are now studying are not those of the

[1] Gobineau, *Relig. et Phil. d. l'Asia Centrale*, p. 348
[2] St. Hilaire.
[3] Prichard, *Admin. of India*, II. 89.
[4] See Williams, *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 57.
[5] Wilson, *ut supra*.

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simple Aryan household, where husband and wife, equals in age, in rights, in serviceable industries, hand in hand ministered to the holy fires on their altars and hearths.[1] They are ages of southern polygamy and caste; when woman, betrothed in childhood, was in law for ever a child, superseded at her husband's pleasure, forbidden to read the Vedas or to take part in religious rites. In these times, too, the epics reveal the semi-barbarous custom of polyandry, although this possession of one wife by several husbands must certainly, even in the stormy social conditions which the Mahâbhârata describes, have been exceptional.[2]

The Râmâyana, indeed, somewhat later, shows profound respect for the marriage relation. But even this poem, abounding in manly sentiments towards women, frequently falls into the tone of contempt which their perpetual minority suggested; as where Râma admonishes Bhârata of the duty of a ruler always to treat them with courtesy, while he should disregard their counsel, and withhold from them all important secrets.

Yet, under such circumstances as these, observe what the law itself confessed. Not only did it declare "mutual fidelity till death the supreme duty between husband and wife,[3] and "virtue, riches, love, the three objects of human desire," to be "the reward of their mutual friendship,"[4] and pronounce the woman the highest beatitude of the man."[5] It admonished

[1] See *Manu*, IX. 96.

[2] In Manu indeed it is not mentioned, and Brahmanism had little toleration for it. The Himâlaya mountaineers explain the custom as necessary for the protection of women during the long absence of their husbands on distant expeditions for trading purposes. Lloyd's *Himalayas*, I. 255.

[3] *Manu*, IX. 101. [4] *Yâjn.*, I. 74. [5] *Manu*, IX. 28.

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him that "where females are honored the deities are pleased, and where they are dishonored, or made miserable, all religious rites are vain;" while "their imprecation brings utter destruction on the house."[1] The inference that women must therefore be constantly supplied with ornaments and gay attire shows that Eastern and Western logic on these matters stands in common need of reconstruction at the hands of woman herself. But the law went deeper than manners. In an outburst of Oriental reverence it proclaims a mother to be greater than a thousand fathers.[2] In a calmer, didactic mood, it defines the sum of all duty to consist in assiduous service of one's father, mother, and spiritual teacher, as long as they live, holding them "equal to the three worlds and the three Vedas;" and even commands that the wife of the teacher, if of the same class, shall be treated with the respect shown to himself.[3] In the Śrâddha, or memorial rite in honor of the pitris, or ancestors, those on the female side must not be forgotten.[4] The Swayamvara form of marriage, *after free choice of a husband by the maiden*, is celebrated by the later poets as well as in the Vedas.[5] And Burnouf has gone so far as to affirm that marriage in India was never a state of servitude for woman.[6]. It is certain that, of the four forms of marriage recognized as valid by Manu, neither necessarily involved such subjection; while, in the Prajâpatya form, bride and bridegroom are distinctly enjoined "to perform together their civil and religious duties."[7]

We have here, it is true, no such testimonies as

[1] *Manu*, III. 55–62. [2] Ibid., II. 145. [3] Ibid., II. 210.
[4] *Yâjn.*, I. 242; III. 4. [5] *R. V.*, I. 116; *Raghuvansa*, VI.
[6] *Essay on the Veda*, p. 213. [7] *Manu*, III. 27–30.

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those of Herodotus and Diodorus concerning Egypt, who inform us that in that country it was customary for the husband to obey the wife, and for women to manage business affairs while the men plied the loom at home.[1] Yet Yâjnavalkya specifies certain classes of women whose debts their husbands were bound to pay, because dependent on their labor for support.[2] And Wilson tells us that all the contempt shown by the Hindus for women was learned by them of their Mohammedan masters.[3] The Râmâyana shows us King Dasarâtha prostrate at the feet of his wicked wife, entreating her to release him from his promise to grant her any boon she might ask. In fact, Hindu literature abounds in amusing illustrations of submissiveness in husbands to wives as well as in wives to husbands.[4]

Influence on public affairs.

The gentleness of Hindu character was favorable to the sway of these subtler forces. This has been shown on a great scale in political, mercantile, and domestic life. Women have ruled empires in India, as in Egypt and Assyria, and had their full share in bringing about the frequent wars and revolutions of the petty Hindu States. The Indian epic, like the Greek and the Teutonic, celebrates feminine control over the military destinies of states, and Kâlidâsa describes the admirable government of Ayodhya by a mythic queen.[5]

Among the native rulers who have heroically resisted foreign invaders, none have shown stronger qualities than Lakshmi Baee, the Rani, or queen, of Jhansi; whose wonderful generalship held the British

[1] *Diod.*, I. 27; *Herod.*, II. 35.
[2] *Yâjn.*, II. 48.
[3] *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, III. 17.
[4] See Wheeler's *India*, II. 569-572.
[5] *Raghuvanśa*, XIX.

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army in check; and who headed her troops in person, dressed as a cavalry officer, and was killed on the field. Sir Hugh Rose declared that the best man on the enemy's side was the Rani of Jhansi.[1] Another Rani, Aus Kour, being elevated by the British to the disputed throne of Pattiala in the Panjâb, an utterly disorganized and revolted state, "as the only person competent to govern it," is recorded by the historian to have changed its whole condition in less than a year, reducing rebellious villages, bringing up the revenues, and establishing order and security everywhere.[2]

Malika Kischwar, queen dowager of Oude, educated her son, who was dispossessed in 1866, to a knowledge of ancient and modern literature, resulting in his becoming an author of high repute, and surrounding her and himself with persons of literary distinction.

Aliah Bae, the Mahratta queen of Malwa, for twenty years preserved peace in her dominions, devoting herself to the rights, happiness, and culture of her people. It was said of her that it would have been regarded as the height of wickedness to become her enemy, or, if need were, not to die in her defence. Hindus and Mohammedans united in prayers that her life might be lengthened. And of so rare a modesty was this great queen, that she ordered a book, which sounded her praises, to be destroyed, and took no notice of the author.

Notwithstanding certain precepts, the law has practically allowed women a larger share in the management of property than the statutes of most Christian nations; and they have shown abundant shrewdness

[1] Arnold's *Dalhousie*, II. 153. [2] Griffin's *Râjahs of the Panjâb*, p. 138.

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and tact in trade. "In family affairs, secular or religious, their influence is very great, and almost supreme. Seldom can a man complete any important business transaction, without having settled the matter with his privy council, in the female apartments."[1] "As the law in Ceylon," says Tennent, "recognizes the absolute control of the lady over the property conveyed to her use, the custom of large marriage portions to woman has thrown an extraordinary extent of the landed property of the country into the hands of the females, and invested them with corresponding proportion of authority in its management."[2] A recent very careful work on India tells us that "in the family circle, and daily rounds of domestic duties, interests, and enjoyments, the Hindu woman has a field for her sympathies which puts her quite on a level with her sisters of the West."[3]

Intellectual recognition.

Nor have the intellectual capacities of women failed of respect. There are hymns in the Rig Veda by female rishis.[4] Malabar boasts seven ancient sages, and four of them were women. The moral sentences of Avyar are taught in the schools, as golden rules of life; and they certainly deserve the name. Here are a few specimens: —

"Honor thy father and mother. Forget not the favors thou hast received. Learn while thou art young. Seek the society of the good. Live in harmony with others. Remain in thy own place. Speak ill of none. Ridicule not bodily infirmities. Pursue not a vanquished foe. Deceive not even thy enemy. Forgiveness is sweeter than revenge. The sweetest bread is that earned by labor. Knowledge is riches. What one learns in his youth is as lasting as if engraven on stone. The wise is he who knows himself. Speak kindly to the poor. Discord and gambling lead to

[1] Buyers, p. 399.
[2] *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 157.
[3] Prichard, *Administr. of India*, II. 89.
[4] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, 37, 38.

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misery. He misconceives his interest who violates his promise. There is no tranquil sleep without a good conscience, nor any virtue without religion. To honor thy mother is the most acceptable worship. Of woman the fairest ornament is modesty."[1]

A little Hindu work on "Deccan Poets," by a pandit, Rameswamie (Calcutta, 1829), tells us that Avyar, supposed by some to have been a foundling, was venerated as the daughter of Brahmâ and Sarasvati. She was the child of a Brahman by a low-caste woman, like Vyâsa and other great Hindu personages, and, though brought up by a singer of the servile class, excelled all her brothers and sisters in learning, and wrote, besides poetry, on astronomy, medicine, chemistry, and geography. The same work mentions many other female poets, among them the daughter of a potter.

Though the law prohibited women from teaching the Vedas, we know that priestesses were teachers of princes. We know that there were Brahmanical schools, not unlike the famous Saracen Colleges of the Middle Ages, at which kings, priests, and women united in the enthusiastic study of metaphysical and moral science; and of the women it is reported that some astonished the masters by the depth and sublimity of their thought, and that others delivered responses from a state of trance.[2]

In the Dramas, women always speak in the Prâkrit or common dialects, while men use the Sanskrit or "holy" speech. These softer popular dialects derived by decomposition from the Sanskrit are believed by Renan to be special consequences of the female organization, and to prove its independent activity in the

[1] From Schoberl's *Hindustan in Miniature*.
[2] Megasthenes, *Nearchus in Strabo*, XV.; Weber, 21.

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structure of the language.[1] More significant is the fact that the Prâkrit, thus proper to woman, and by her means introduced into literature, has gradually supplanted the Sanskrit, and forms the basis of the present spoken languages of India. So that the stamp of female influence is in fact conspicuous in the historical development of Hindu speech, as an informing and determining force.

Literary appreciation of woman.

It would require a separate volume to render justice to the fine appreciation of womanly qualities in what we already know of Hindu literature. It has been noticed that, in recognizing these, the poets abandon exaggeration and draw from nature.[2] Nothing could be more tender and noble than these ideal pictures, covering, too, so wide a range of destiny and desire: the chaste love of Râma and Sitâ, — her courage, fortitude, and womanly dignity under his unjust suspicions, her mastery of all forms of evil by moral purity and spiritual insight; the fidelity of Damayanti to her unhappy Nala, tempted by an evil spirit first to play away his crown, and then to flee from her for shame at his beggary, but followed and redeemed at last by that loyalty of love, which thought only of the misery he must endure in offending against his nobler nature; the piety of Savitri, controlling fate, charming the god of death himself, by her wisdom and love, into giving back life to her dead husband, and sight to his blind father, with his lost crown, and the glory of his fallen race.[3] Equally intuitive is the sense of woman's power to inspire a noble manhood with absolute devotion. The Mahâbhârata describes

[1] *De l'Origine du Langage*, Pref. p. 28.
[2] Monier Williams, *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 54.
[3] Savitri and Satyavan, Episode of the *Mahâbhârata*.

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the passionate love of Rurus, imploring the gods to restore his Pramadvara, and offering to yield up his own lifetime to be added to hers.

> "I give thee half my future days, beloved,
> Light to renew thy life be drawn from mine." [1]

And Kâlidâsa gives us the tale, wrought out in Eastern traits, of the wasting grief of good prince Adja for his young wife, whom the fall of celestial flowers on her bosom has called away from earth; pursuing his Indumati through all sweet perfumes and sounds and forms, refusing to turn away his mind or to be comforted, the mighty grief slowly dividing his soul, as a bough will rend the wall into which it grows, until after "wearing through eight years of pain, patiently and faithfully for his young son's sake, living on pictures and images of his beloved, and on fleeting transports of reunion, in his dreams," he freely lays aside the ruined body for an immortal life, with the lost one, and among the gods.[2] In Hindu poetic justice the fickleness, unfaithfulness, or harsh suspicion towards true womanly love, which so often recurs in Eastern story, is always visited by remorse, distraction, or despair; and even where changes of heart are ascribed to the malevolence of evil powers or the maledictions of offended saints, they are in no wise freed from these penalties, which teach humility and truth, while they honor outraged virtue by proving it befriended by the eternal laws.[3] What European poet knows better than Kâlidâsa how gracious a soul is born in nature at the touch of woman? Śakuntalâ, cherishing her plants like a sister,

[1] *Mahâbh.*, I. [2] *Raghuvaṅśa*, VIII.
[3] See especially *Śakuntalâ* and the *Râmâyana*.

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"Never moistening in the stream
Her own parched lips, till she had fondly poured
Its purest water on their thirsty roots,
And oft, when she would fain have decked her hair
With their thick clustering blossoms, in her love
Robbing them not e'en of a single flower," [1]

infuses into them her own affections: the woods, the flowers, the forest creatures, feel her coming and going like the breath of life and the blast of death.

"In sorrow for her loss the herd of deer
Forget to browse; the peacock on the lawn
Ceases its dance; the very trees around
Shed their pale leaves like tears, — while they dismiss
Their dear Śakuntalâ with loving wishes." [2]

"He who would wish her to endure the hardships of penance would attempt to sever the hard wood with the blue leaf of the lotus." She is "the mellowed fruit of virtuous actions in some former birth." — Wild beasts respect the holiness of Damayanti, wandering in the deserts; the noisy caravan halts, and the rough men beseech for her benediction.[3] The poet of the Mahâbhârata sings the praise of woman like an earlier Schiller. The wife is "man's other half, his inmost friend, source of his bliss, root of his salvation; friend of the solitary one, consoling him with sweet words, in his duties like a father, in his sorrows like a mother." She reproves his neglect of manly duties, and admonishes him of the forgotten God within him, the witness and judge of human deeds. Deserted by her husband, who refuses to recognize her, the Śakuntalâ of the epic says with dignity: "Thou, who knowest what is true and what is false, O King!

[1] Williams's translation. [2] Ibid.
[3] Nala and Damayanti, Episode of the *Mahâbhârata*.

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scorning this child of our love, bringest shame on thyself. Thinking, 'I am alone,' thou hast forgotten that beholder from of old, who is in the heart. Doing wickedly, thou imaginest, 'No one knows it is I.' But the gods know, and the witness within thee: sun and moon, day and night, their own hearts, and the justice of God, behold the deeds of men. The spirit that dwells within us judges us hereafter."

Sitâ, the ideal wife in the Râmâyana, is Râma's "primeval love," not less tenderly human for being divine. She compels him, by her devotion, to take her with him into his exile in the wilderness, overpowering his reason and will alike by the higher wisdom of love. She rebukes him for his anger against even the Râkshasas, demon foes of gods and men, as unbecoming one who had assumed the consecration of a religious life; and warns him to subdue the first risings of evil desire, since even a great mind may contract guilt through neglecting almost imperceptible moral distinctions: with which frankness Râma is delighted, and replies, "O Sitâ, one who is not admonished is not beloved. You have spoken becomingly, and you are my companion in virtue, and dearer to me than life."[1] Fully to appreciate this recognition of womanhood, we must remember that Râma is nothing less than incarnated deity.

Even the wife of the demon Râvana, the Satan of the epic, warns him against gratifying his sensual passions on the person of his beautiful captive; "for he who forces the inclination of a woman shall die an early death, or become the prey of endless disease." The Râmâyana likens "the wind that drives away the white lotus from the too thirsty bees" to "the modesty

[1] *Râmâyana*, B. II.

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that drives the coy bride from her husband." Sitâ, on her part, can forgive her cruelest enemies. Saved from their hands, she says, "Why should I revenge myself on the servants of Râvana, whom harsh commands drove to injure me? What I have suffered pays the penalty for a former life. I would not punish others who are also enforced to evil." What exquisite sense of the fine divination of womanly love is in the picture of Damayanti, surrounded by the gods, who, to deceive her, have all taken the form of her chosen Nala, and mingle in the crowd of suitors, in her father's hall!

"And Damayanti trembled with fear, and folded her hands in reverence before the gods, praying them to resume their immortal shapes, and reveal Nala, that she might choose him for her lord in presence of all. Then the gods wondered at her truth and love, and revealed straightway the tokens of their godhead. And Damayanti saw the four bright gods, and knew they were not mortal heroes; for there was no sweat on their brows, nor dust on their garments, and their garlands were fresh as if the flowers were just gathered, and their feet touched not the earth. And she saw also the true Nala; for he stood before her with shadow falling to the ground, and twinkling eyes and drooping garland, and moisture was on his brow, and dust on his raiment. And she went and took the hem of his garment, and threw a wreath of radiant flowers around his neck, and thus chose him for her lord. And a sound of wild sorrow burst from all the Rajahs; but the gods and sages cried aloud, 'Well done!' And Nala said, 'Since, O maiden! you have chosen me for your husband, in presence of the gods, know that I will be your faithful consort, ever delighting in your words, and so long as my soul shall inhabit this body I solemnly vow to be thine, and thine alone.'"[1]

The lamentation of Târa, the wife of Bâli, over the dead body of her husband, is as touching and noble as any thing in poetry.

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, I. 484.

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"Why lookest thou so dull on thy child, thou, to whom thy children were so dear?

"Thy face seems to smile on me in the bosom of death, as if thou wert alive.

"I see thy glory still like sunset on a mountain's head."[1]

Woman the inspiration of the Epos.

As the moral interest of the Iliad centres in the nemesis that follows crime against the sanctities of wedded life, so that of the Râmâyana centres in the public and private calamities naturally incident to polygamy. It is the attempt of one of the king's wives to set aside the rights of the son of another, in the interest of her own offspring, that brings about the exile of Râma, the misery of the people, the death of the unwise, uxorious king himself, the capture of Sitâ, and the war for her recovery; and this last portion of the epic is but a Hindu counterpart of the Trojan war in punishment of the rape of Helen. But while the Greek heroine shares the criminality of her captor, the Hindu Sitâ is the ideal of the faithful wife.

The crime which leads on the woes depicted in that other great Hindu epic, the Mahâbhârata, is a gambling match, in which a monarch, made desperate by continual losses, finally plays away his own wife, — an atrocity which is rebuked on the spot by a Brahman, who represents the eternal ethical law; protesting that Judhishthira "lost *himself* before he staked his wife, and having first become a slave could no longer have the power to stake Draupadi."

Without entering into definite criticism of all these ideals, I cannot forbear quoting the excellent remarks of Monier Williams in his sketch of Indian Epic Poetry.

[1] *Râmâyana*, B. IV.

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"Sitâ, Draupadi, and Damayanti," he says, "engage our affections and interest far more than Helen or even Penelope. It cannot be doubted that in these delightful portraits we have true representations of the purity and simplicity of Hindu domestic manners in early times. Children are dutiful to their parents and submissive to their superiors; younger brothers are respectful to their elder brothers; parents are fondly attached to their children, and ready to sacrifice themselves for their welfare; wives are loyal, devoted, obedient to husbands, yet show much independence of character, and do not hesitate to express their own opinions; husbands are tenderly affectionate towards their wives, and treat them with respect and courtesy; daughters and women generally are virtuous and modest, yet spirited, and when occasion requires courageous: love and harmony reign throughout the family circle. It is in depicting scenes of domestic affection, and expressing these feelings that belong to human nature in all times and places, that Sanskrit epic poetry is unrivalled."

Reverence for *motherhood* is here carried beyond all other forms of respect for natural ties. The divine sons of Daśarâtha, all gods, all bow at the feet of their human mothers. Râma, obliged to go into exile that his father may not break his vow, is indeed unmoved by his mother's unmeasured distress, and cannot concede the claims she founds on the Śâstras themselves, to greater respect and obedience than is due even to a father; yet from his exile he sends messages of profound affection to her, and even to that other wife of his father whose criminal ambition was the cause of his own disinheritance, and bids his

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brother Bhârata pay every form of pious attention to both.

The inspiration of these two great epics is indeed nothing else than the *Worth of Woman*. They celebrate her not only as imparting a divine dignity to every sacrifice for her sake, but as conquering all moral evil through her constancy and faith. In this whole cycle of mythology, it is always woman who destroys the dreaded powers, and revives the energy of good. In the natural symbolism of the Rig Veda, "the divine Night arrives, an immortal goddess, shining with innumerable eyes, scattering darkness with their splendors; and men come to her as birds to their nests. She drives away the wolf and the thief, and bears them safely through the gloom."[1] And the Dawn arrives, "a daughter of the sky, shining on them like a young wife, arousing every living being to his work, bringing light and striking down darkness; leader of the days; lengthener of life; fortunate, the love of all, who brings the eye of the god."[2] Woman prepares the holy fire. "The great sacred mothers of the sacrifice have uttered praise, and decorate the child of the sky."[3]

And of mythology in general.

It is remarkable, in view of the reverence of Hindu life for male offspring, that the later theogonies combine male and female elements, and treat both sexes as *equally necessary to the conception of deity*. Creation, in Manu as well as in the Upanishads, proceeds from the divine Love or Desire, becoming twain, male and female.[4] This co-essentiality of the two, for all manifestation of the absolute, is common to the Hindu,

[1] *R. V.*, X. 127. [2] *R. V.*, VII. 77.
[3] *R. V.*, IX. 33, 5. Perhaps symbolical expressions, yet not the less significant.
[4] *Manu*, I. 32; *Brihad Up.* I. 43; Wilson's *Essays on Hindu Religion*, I. 241, 245.

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Egyptian, and Phœnician religions. The deities are androgynous, whether Brahma-Maya, Osiris-Isis, or Baal-Baut; or they flow in series of twofold emanations through all pantheistic cosmogonies, Oriental, Gnostic, Neo-Platonic, under names not so familiar as even these, — names which it is needless to enumerate. In most cases the divine equality of sex is still further represented by the fact that these wives of the deities are also their sisters, and thus co-eternal. It is a striking illustration of that greater breadth of sympathy we have already noted in polytheistic and pantheistic forms of religion, as compared with intensely monarchical, that this cosmogonic recognition of the equality in the sexes was confined to the former class. Thus it is quite unknown to the old monotheistic severity of the Hebrew faith, as well as to the distinctively Christian, in its original form, which prefers the masculine alike in its name of God and its choice of Saviour. Only with latest heresy does God, *as God*, come to stand as "Our Mother."[1] Honor to deity as mother was indeed, both in Hindu and Egyptian worship, carried to a point beyond what was rendered to any male function or authority. To Isis, greatest of Egyptian divinities, whose myriad names were woven into this one, the most tender of all, answers the Vedic Aditi, "Mother of all the gods."[2]

The Word feminine.

And not less significant is the fact that in all the older Eastern religions "*the Word*" *is feminine*. Thought, in its purest symbol, is thus awarded

[1] So it is only in the later Kabbalistic theology of the Hebrews, subsequent to Greek and Oriental influences on their faith, that we find the first emanation of Deity conceived as "the great Mother." (Sohar. See Berthold's *Christologia*, § 23.) And the Book of the "Wisdom of Solomon," under similar influences, praises its female "*σοφία*," as the mirror of the power of God.

[2] *Herodotus*, II. 40; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*.

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to the physically weaker sex. In India, as Sarasvati, woman is the genius of art, literature, eloquence, — is, in short, "the Word;" ever the holiest symbol to the Hindu mind. She is thus properly the wife of Brahmâ. At her festivals, as goddess of learning, all books, pens, and other implements of study, are gathered in the school-houses in India, and strewn with white flowers and barley-blades; and in the prayer her name is coupled with the Vedas and all the sacred writings, and her love invoked, as one with that of Brahmâ, "the great Father of all."[1] "Sarasvati," says the Rig Veda, "enlightens all intellects." "The gods made Ila the instructress of men." Vâch, or Speech, is "the melodious Queen of the gods," who says: —

"I myself declare this, which is desired by gods and men."

"Every man whom I love, I make him terrible. I make him a priest, a seer."

"I make him wise."[2]

Here is Indra's praise of Lakshmi: —

"Thou art mystic and spiritual knowledge. Thou art the philosophy of reasoning, — the three Vedas.

"Thou art the arts and sciences, thou moral and political wisdom.

"The worlds have been preserved and reanimated by thee."[3]

"Every book of knowledge," says the Hitopadeśa, "which is known to Usanas or Vrihaspati, is by nature implanted in the understanding of women." As Durgâ, it is woman who slays the Satan of the later popular belief, and delivers mankind from the fear of evil; for which service this goddess is adored by all

[1] Wilson's *Essays*, II. 190.
[2] *Rig Veda*, I. 3, 12; I. 31, 11; VIII. 89, 10; X. 125, 5.
[3] *Vishnu Purâna*, I. ch. ix.

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deities and saints.[1] In the myth of the Kena Upanishad, it is a woman, Umâ, who represents divine knowledge. She is a shining mediator between Brahma and the gods: none but she is able to reveal to Indra "who it was that had appeared to them, enforcing their adoration, and vanished when they sought to approach too near." The epics also describe Umâ as one of the three divine daughters of the great mountain king, Himavat, all of them renowned in the three worlds for force of contemplation, for chastity, and for power in expounding divine wisdom.[2] And as in the Rig Veda, at the beginning of Hindu religious development, we have Aditi, "mother of the gods," so in the mystical Purânas, at the end, we have Durgâ, or Mahâmâyâ, defined as "the eternal substance of the world, soul of all forms, whom none has power to praise; by whom the universe is created, upheld, preserved, into whom it is absorbed at last."[3]

Christianity and Heathenism.

After eighteen centuries of Christianity, the task of emancipating woman from legal incapacities yet remains to be accomplished. Such progress as has actually been made in this direction cannot be laid to the sole account of any distinctive religion. Physical and social science, intellectual culture, and practical necessity have had more to do with it than either Christian belief or that spirit of brotherhood which Christianity has held to be its own peculiar grace. The history of its churches as a whole affords no ground for according them superiority, in this form of justice, to the heathen world. The Hindu law forbade woman to read the Vedas, or to officiate at holy rites. Christian councils and Popes, echoing the

[1] *Purânas*, quoted in Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 371.
[2] See texts in Muir, IV. 367. [3] Ibid., 371; Wilson's *Essays*, I. 247.

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great Apostle to the Gentiles, have interdicted her not only from assumption of the priesthood, but from speaking in religious assemblies, or administering the rite of baptism.[1] Christian legislation has been in many points even more unjust to her than Manu. A law of Justinian concerning deaconesses makes death the penalty for their marrying. What is there in the Hindu code harsher towards females than their exclusion by English common law from "benefit of clergy," so that they were put to death for crimes which a clergyman could commit with impunity, and for which a man was simply branded?[2] Have Hindu laws prescribed the self-burning of widows? Eighteen centuries of Christianity elapsed before it ceased burning women at the stake for heresy. Is the absolute authority of husband and father the oldest despotism? It survives still in the law of England, which "vests parental rights in the father alone, to the entire exclusion of the mother;" giving him power not only to remove the children from her during his life, but to appoint a guardian with similar power over them after his death.[3] What could be worse than the European principle of "feme covert," the absorption of her legal existence during marriage into that of her husband, still described in the very language of the Hindu Law? Or what shall we say of the facts that the Ecclesiastical or Canon Law has been the source of woman's severest disabilities; and that it is only in so far as the secular principle has prevailed over the ecclesiastical that any progress has been made in re-

[1] Laodicea; Carthage; Autun (670 A.C.); Aix-la-Chapelle (816); Paris (824). The Synod of Orange (441) forbids the ordination of deaconesses. See Ludlow, *Woman's Work in the Church*, p. 65.

[2] Wendell's *Blackstone*, I. 445, n.

[3] *Westminster Review* for Jan. 1872, p. 30.

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moving them?[1] The persecution of witches in modern Europe has no parallel in Hindu or any other barbarism. Many of the legal disqualifications of woman, which have descended from feudalism, make her perpetual wardship among the heathen appear almost respectable in comparison.

Treatment of Woman by different religions.

And on the other hand, as we have seen, an instinctive respect for the sex was not wanting to the pre-Christian world. It was the commandment of nature. Its roots were in religion, in moral appreciation, in generosity and in love. Judaism and Christianity helped it onward, by their stern protest against polygamy and sensuality, and by sublime ideals of purity and beneficence. But the Church, it must be remembered, was anticipated by a noble movement of Roman law, which steadily transformed the status of woman from almost total bondage into freedom and equality in respect of conjugal, marital, and proprietary rights. It has been said with truth that Roman jurisprudence gave her "a place far more elevated than that since assigned to her by Christian governments."[2] The culmination of liberal tendencies under Christian emperors, as especially shown in the laws of Constantine in her favor, was the issue of a *secular* movement, which had been penetrating for centuries through the whole mass of Roman legislation. Under Christianity itself, the progress was slow: later emperors undid the work of earlier ones; and it is admitted even by Troplong that this religion "did not take full possession of civil society till after the older races had been rejuvenated

[1] See *Blackstone*, I. 445; also Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 153.
[2] *Westm. Rev.* for Oct. 1856.

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by fresh life infused from new sources.[1] Without disparaging the services of the Church, we must render justice to that far greater help towards the emancipation of woman which came from a different quarter. I mean those Teutonic tribes, to whom a queen was as good as a king, and who gave Rome an empress.[2] I mean those free "barbarians," who brought with them a perfect equality of sex in all the domestic and social relations; with whom the wife was accustomed not to yield up a dowry, but to receive one from the husband, while each formally endowed the other with spear, and steed, and sword, in token of common public duties and claims; whose women were "fenced with chastity," and "guardians of their own children;" who held that "somewhat of sanctity and prescience was inherent in the female sex;"[3] who entered neither on peace nor on war without consulting the priestess as an oracle; whose mythology conceived destiny in female forms, whether as Valkyriur or Nornir, at the tree of life or on the field of death; and whose oldest poem, the Voluspa, was ascribed to a woman, represented as a divinity who unveils the past and future to gods and men.

But behind Roman, Christian, and Teutonic helpers, rise the grand Greek ideals of Wisdom and Maternity, Athêna and Demêter, with their consecration not of thought only, but of earth and air. The inviolability of the family was enthroned in Hêrâ. The awe of all deities beheld Hestia, the earth, as their common mother, and the witness of their most sacred vows. And even behind these stands Egyp- Greece and Egypt.

[1] Troplong, *Influence du Christianisme*, p. 218.
[2] Victoria, "Mother of Camps." See Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire Romain*, p. 189.
[3] See Tacitus, *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 18, 19, 8; *Hist.*, IV. 61.

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tian Isis, Goddess Mother, crowned with her thrones, shielding Osiris with her outspread wings, co-equal ruler of the land during his calamity, and its saviour through her own distress; tender seeker of the lost divinity of love and truth; his deliverer from bonds, and his avenger on the powers of evil; commending even the brute creatures to human gratitude for their sympathy and help in her beneficent work. How beautiful the myth![1] Diodorus gives us an inscription in which she says what she well might say, "What I have decreed, none can annul." And Apuleius calls her "Nature, beginning of ages, parent of all."[2]

India. These natural instincts spoke clearly in the Far East also. There was faith in maternity as the root of redemption, long before men bowed at the shrine of a Catholic "Mother of God." When Dante and Dominic beheld the mysteries of hell and heaven through faith in the sanctity of Womanhood, they but made fresh confession of a spiritual need, which in other forms is as surely represented in the old Hindu Epic, Drama, and Sacred Hymn. And when free opportunity and becoming culture shall have been at last achieved for women, and the old contempt for their intellectual capacities shall have everywhere gone to its place, it will be better understood that the recognition has been but clearer vision of what could not anywhere have been wholly hid. Recent movements in India for the better education of women, and the recent mission (1870) of the leader of Hindu Theism to England, in the interest of their deliverance from the marital, social, and ecclesiastical

[1] See Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*.
[2] Diod., I. 27; Apuleius, *Metamorph.*

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oppressions of ages, are but the springing of these ancient waters afresh with renewed power. Native Hindu women are being educated for the medical profession, without distinction of caste. Some have already entered on regular practice.[1] "In north-western India," we are told, "the pandits are always ready to do their very best to promote the cause of female education."[2] Miss Carpenter, in her recent noble mission for this purpose, found the intelligent Hindus so earnest and so wise in their interest in it, that she was fain, as she tells us, to follow their leading, convinced that the best way for them was to emancipate themselves.[3]

And our hopes are strengthened, when we remember that this contemplative race would naturally be disposed to regard intelligence, by whomsoever manifested, as worthy of respect; and that even the despotism of caste could not wholly exclude the special gifts of woman from hospitality and honor, with a people whom it is but just to call the Brain of the East.[4]

[1] At the school of Dr. Corbyn in Bareilly, where twenty-eight native girls are now studying. See *Victoria Magazine*, April, 1871.

[2] Prichard, *Administr. of India*, II. 73.

[3] *Six Months in India*, I. 78, 80.

[4] The position of Woman in Buddhism will be noticed in the sections relating to that religion.

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VII.

SOCIAL FORMS AND FORCES.

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SOCIAL FORMS AND FORCES.

IT has been usual to ascribe the social system of the Hindus to the deliberate artifices of a priesthood. But the germs of caste are in the instinctive, not in the self-conscious age of man. Nor can we now accept Niebuhr's sweeping statement that "castes are in all cases the consequence of foreign conquests." Neither theory meets the all-important question: Of what social needs and aspirations is a system so general in the early history of nations the natural expression? Origin of castes.

The religious instincts are as old as the social. The savage makes a fetich of the wooden sticks out of which he churns his fire; and the medicine-man listens with awe to the din of his own rattle or drum. The sorcerer makes an image of a diseased person out of earth or grass, and, confounding his own processes with the life of the individual represented, ascribes to this work of his own hands a magical power over the disease. This is the rude beginning of religious mysticism; and it is but a more refined form of the same "superstition," when the crucifix is believed to possess a divine efficacy in removing the crosses of life and the anguish of death from the human being in whose likeness it is made. But in The priestly caste.

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neither case does the word "superstition" express the whole truth. To the primitive tribes nature is not merely hunting-ground and pasture, but mysterious living Presence of invisible powers. Endless motion and endless rest, brooding stillness, inexplicable sounds, stir strange yearning and awe in these children of the open eye and ear. Who shall solve these mysteries, and draw the secret runes of life and death out of the night and the day? He whose organization is most sensitive to the contact of these subtle forces shall be holy and dear to men. The natural seer is the first recognized ruler. The grateful people will live to honor, die to appease him. They will stand afar off, while he talks with gods and spirits for their sake. Moses shall go in among the clouds and lightnings for us. Vaśishtha shall pray for us to Indra, the storm-ruler, to annihilate our foes. This interpreter of Nature fulfils all ideal functions, except that of military chief or king. He is magician, astrologer, physician, philosopher, poet, moral leader. And he is eminently sincere. It is his faith and feeling that make him what he is, and give him his power over the people. He is meeting their deepest needs as well as his own; being more plainly impressible than others by those powers which all confess. As yet there is no priestcraft here. And as nature is felt but as a chaos of undistinguished powers, so society has reached nothing like a hierarchy of classes. A division of labor is in fact just beginning in this instinctive respect for the inspired, or possessed person.

Such is the Aryan *purohita;* such the Hebrew *nâbi* or *roëh*.[1] Both are properly natural seers. The name purohita, meaning *one who has charge*,[2] shows how

[1] 1 Sam. ix. 9; Judges xvii. [2] Lassen, I. 795.

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closely the sentiment we have described allied itself with the performance of religious rites. As social relations are developed, this class become not only psalmists and singers, but teachers and counsellors of the king.[1] They direct his policy, simply because they are his wisest men. "That king withstands his enemies," says the Rig Veda, "who honors a purohita; and the people bow before him of their own accord."[2] The seer teaches his wisdom to his children, who follow in his honored paths. They come to have esoteric mysteries; but it is simply because their religious disciplines as well as natural susceptibilities have put them in possession of physical or psychological knowledge which the multitude can receive only in parables.

The Brahmans.

By and by the seers become an organization. These hereditary disciplines draw them into closer combination for such purposes as grow naturally out of their public functions; and we have Levites, Magi, Brahmans. The Hindu purohitas, thus transformed, are bound into *charanas* and *parishads*, schools and associations for definite objects, such as the guardianship of formulas and rites, or the study of Vedic hymns. They are divided into forty-nine *gotras*, or families, who trace their descent from the "seven holy rishis," and the mythical or other saints who figure in their traditions; and these gotras are governed by strict religious and social regulations. Gradually the text becomes more precious than the soul which created it; and at last its guardian is holier even than itself. The freedom and ardor of the Veda hymn are supplanted by formulas of doctrine, the oracles of Nature

[1] 2 Sam. xxiv. 11.

[2] *R. V.*, IV. 5, 7, 10. See Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, I. 80.

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by ritual law. A corporate authority grows up, by force of intellectual supremacy and in the name of religion, which favorable circumstances develop into the Brahman caste.

The heroic life of the Greek cantons in the older Aryan spirit forbade this distinct separation of a religious class from the rest of the community.[1] But the contemplative Hindus, passive, fatalistic, yearning in the lassitude of tropical life for self-surrender to ideal powers, gave full sweep to the caste tendency, and became its typical representatives.

The priesthood.

Such, substantially, is the history of priesthood in all times. It begins in the natural gravitation of power to the wisest and friendliest men. In the Middle Ages, a Martin, an Ambrose, or a Gregory, standing for the weak and oppressed in the name of God, made iron knees and fierce unshorn heads bow down, and do penance for every act of injustice. But where the prophet stood in the morning of a religion, by and by stands the priest, its functionary, inheriting his honors, but not his spirit. It is the destiny of every organized religion. In the Eastern races the degeneration was not arrested by science or political liberty. But, on the other hand, it escaped that sort of ecclesiastical jesuitism which follows the deliberate refusal to recognize what these teachers bring. For the impulses of nature wrought *through* the religion, not against it: a real faith, both in priests and people, made devotees and martyrs after its own kind.

The other castes likewise begin in certain rude

[1] The priest and king were there one and the same person; and, both in Hellenic and Roman civilization, the political element gradually absorbed the religious into its own current, shaping it to practical and general uses.

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forms of social need. A portion of the tribe becomes agricultural. It must be defended from sudden incursions, in its quiet settlement along the Ganges or Nile. The Soldier, as more independent, and as holding more firmly to the traditions of the free roving life, will stand higher in the social scale than the Husbandman. His function is an indispensable one: he assumes, with this social pre-eminence, the special burden of public defence. He rules not by the might of the strongest, so much as by the *need* of the strongest. Contempt of labor in the ancient communities was *comparative*, not absolute. In all of them there are recognitions of its worth, such as Hesiod's "Works and Days," or the lives of early Romans, like Cincinnatus and Cato. But the labors of the priest and soldier are more prized than those of artisans or tillers of the earth. The pursuits of settled life begin to exist, on mere sufferance by the armed nomad; and they endure only so far as protected by the military class. Again, the handicrafts, as they arise, are subservient to the wants of the agriculturist; and so we have the natural order of the castes. Veneration for parental disciplines and example, and the need of an exact transmission of methods, render all employments hereditary. Force of fellowship, tradition, custom, accomplish the rest. Thus society becomes organized by the laws of precedence in public service. In its origin the baleful caste system, which is not confined to Egypt and India, but in some form has appeared in most races at a certain stage of development, was simply an instinctive effort for the Organization of Labor.[1]

The other castes.

[1] Quinet (*Génie des Religions*) has traced a striking parallel between Hindu castes and the European classes in the Middle Ages, another epoch of social reconstruction.

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Plato himself, in his ideal Republic, supposes classes to have originated in a natural division of labor, and justice to be that adherence of each to its own function which the general good requires. I cannot doubt that Plato's "justice" is the philosophical statement of a natural ideal, which had much to do with constructing the earlier forms of society.

Hindu ideas of the origin of castes.

An old Hindu myth gives the following solution of our question. Brahmâ created a son, and, calling him Brahman, bade him study and teach the Veda. But, fearing the attacks of wild beasts, he prayed for help; and a second son was created, named Kshatriya, or warrior, to protect him. But, employed as he was in defence, he could not provide the necessaries of life; and so a third son, Vaiśya, was sent to till the soil; and as, once more, he could not make the tools, and do the other needful service, a youth called Sudra succeeded, and all dwelt together, serving Brahmâ.[1] The Brihad Upanishad says that "Brahmâ is in all the castes, in the form of each." The law books and the older mythologists deprecate the idea of a violent origin of the system, and affirm that all the castes descend from One God; the priest proceeding from Brahmâ's head, the soldier from his arm, the husbandman from his leg, the śudra from his foot. Buddhist accounts, which describe castes as the consequence of social degeneracy, none the less represent them as having been spontaneous and elective. A discourse attributed to Buddha himself contains a legend of the following purport: —

[1] Creuzer, *Relig. de l'Antiquité*, I. 227.

[2] *Manu*, I. 31; *Vâjnavalkya*, III. 126. A passage to similar effect in the *Rig Veda* (X. 90, 6, 7) is believed to be of later origin than the rest. Müller's *Chips*, II. 308.

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When outrages on society began, a ruler was elected to preserve order, who received for such service a portion of the produce. He was called Khattiyo, or *Kshatrya*, as owner of lands, and afterwards *Raja*, as rendering mankind happy. But his race was originally of the same stock with the people, and of perfect equality with them. Then, by reason of the increase of crimes, the people appointed from among themselves Bahmanas, or suppressors of vice and awarders of punishment, — a class which afterwards became fond of living in huts in the wilderness; and these were the ancestors of the *Brahmans*, who also were therefore originally of the common stock. Other persons, who distinguished themselves as artificers, were called wessa, or *Vaiśya*, while others, addicted to hunting (ludda), became *śudras;* but all these classes were at first equal with the rest of mankind. Finally, from out of all these classes came persons who despised their own castes, left their habitations, and led wandering lives, saying, "I will become *samana*, ascetic, or priest." Thus the sacerdotal class, being formed from all the rest, does not properly constitute a caste.[1]

Finally, the Bhagavadgitâ, giving the philosophy of Brahmanism on the subject, refers these subordinations to differences of natural disposition (*guna*) among men; in other words, to moral gravitation.[2] This resembles the defences of slavery offered by the later Greeks and modern Americans; and serves, like these, to demonstrate that the worst institutions are compelled to do homage to a natural sense of right, and must defend themselves by the pretence of justice. But the common idea which all these Hindu authorities suggest — the intimation of mythologist, lawgiver, and theorist alike — is that castes were, in their origin, spontaneities of social growth, pursuing, both by divine order and human consent, the common good of society. Nor did the common sense and humanity of the people fail to recognize that the separation of

[1] This legend, as translated by Turnour, is given in full in Colonel Sykes's *Notes on Ancient India* (*Journal of Roy. As. Soc.*, vol. vi.).

[2] So the Vishnu and Vâyu Purânas.

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the classes by absolute difference of origin was itself a delusion, and refuse it place in their ideal of history.[1]

The lowest castes.

As far as regards the three upper castes in India, the explanation now given seems adequate. But it is to be noted that the lowest caste was black; that its name Śudra is not Sanskrit, but designated an indigenous tribe; and that its caste degradation would thus appear to be the result of conquest by the invading Aryans.[2]

There are many outcast classes, even lower than the Śudra. These are the product of "mixed marriages," from which, as confusion of the castes, according to the law, all possible evils proceed.[3] Doubtless Michelet's opinion, that the whole relation of the caste system to the aborigines was but an indispensable policy of self-protection on the part of the Aryan tribes against absorption into degraded races, is entitled to some regard in explaining this intense hatred of mixed marriages, which we find throughout the Brahmanical legislation.[4] Yet there are also ignoble sources of low-caste miseries, and it is plain that priestcraft has had its share in elaborating a system which began in simple instincts of mutual help.

[1] Muir has fully established the truth of his statement (*Sansk. Texts*, I. 160) that "the *separate origination* of the four castes is far from being an article of belief universally received by Indian antiquity." Abundant passages in the Râmâyana describe the earliest or Krita age of man, in which "righteousness was supreme," when "the soul of all beings was white;" when "men were alike in trust, knowledge, and observance;" when "the castes were devoted to one deity, used one formula, rule, and rite, and practised one duty." And the Bhâgavata Purâna says (IX. 14, 18) there was formerly but one Veda, essence of speech, one God, and one caste, the triple Veda entering in the Tretâ, or later and degenerate age.

[2] Unless the Aryan occupation was, as Maine believes, a colonization rather than a conquest. The *Rig Veda* calls the black skin the "hated of Indra" (IX. 73, 5). *Varna*, or caste, may mean color; and the Mahâbhârata carries out the idea, representing Brahmâ as having created the Brahman white, the Kshatriya red, the Vaiśya yellow, and the Śudra black. Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 18; Duncker, II. 12, 55; Lassen, I. 799.

[3] *Manu*, VIII. 353; X. 45.

[4] *Bible de l' Humanité*, p. 40.

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The Brahmans must have owed their supremacy to other sources than physical force. In modern Kashmir and the Mahratta country they still rule by the brain and the pen.[1] The Hindu has always believed that his chief power lay in blessing and cursing. According to Manu, "Speech is the weapon by which they destroy their foes."[2] The Râmâyana makes the priest Vaśishtha overcome the Kshatriya Viśvâmitra by the miraculous power of his staff. In the Rig Veda, both these saints, who became for later times representatives of rival castes, are alike *purohitas;* and the whole third book is ascribed to Viśvâmitra. No contest of classes had then arisen, and the poet's inspiration was honored without regard to the question whether he was soldier or priest.[3] Even were it probable that any such internecine conflict between the two orders as that described by the poets in the myth of Paraśurâma, which ends in the "extermination" of the Kshatriyas, ever really occurred, it is plain that nothing of the kind was possible until the caste system had become fully organized. In no case could it have been the primary source of priestly supremacy.

Origin of Brahmanical authority.

Paraśurâma himself, in the legend, is a Kshatriya, and destroys his own caste, not merely in the interest of Brahmanical revenge for the murdered priestly tribe of Brighu, but also from motives of a personal character, the Kshatriyas having slain his father. It would seem from this that the reference is to a civil war inside the soldier caste.[4]

Lassen and Roth, upon the whole, regard the con-

[1] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology*, *Journal Bengal Society*, 1866.
[2] *Manu*, XI. 33. [3] Burnouf, *Essai sur le Veda.*
[4] Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth.*, II. 321; Muir, *Sansk. Texts*, I. ch. iii.; *Mahâbh.*, III.

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flict of Vaśishtha and Viśvâmitra as a symbolic expression for the victory of Brahmanical organization over the simpler life of Vedic times. Viśvâmitra, as his name indicates, has always represented the democratic or popular element in Indian faith. And the outcast races have generally been associated with his family.[1]

When this organization of castes was effected, or how far its development ever proceeded, is not easy to determine. A rationalistic and democratic element, of which distinctive Buddhism was but a single expression, seems to have existed in every epoch of Hindu thought; and this must have constantly hindered the growth of Brahmanical authority. The progress of the system must therefore have been slow. A civil war of so barbarous and destructive a character as the tale of Paraśurâma implies becomes extremely improbable.

If, as has been conjectured, the conflict occurred in later Buddhist times,[2] it must still have been of a very different character from that described in the legend; for the history of Buddhism gives no record of such a conflict in any form. Nor, as matter of fact, were the Kshatriyas "exterminated;" either "three times," as the poet puts it, or even once. Their descendants abound in Râjputana and the Panjâb, amidst the oldest seats of Hindu civilization. In the epics there are still signs of superiority in the soldier class: the chieftains often treat Brahmans with contempt, as mercenary sacrificers. At the marriage of Draupadi,[3] the

[1] The word *viś* means probably to occupy or hold (Greek, οἶκος; Latin, *vicus;* English, *wick*), and indicates the settled householding class; hence Vaiśyas, the agricultural caste, and probably Vishnu, the preserving One.

[2] Wheeler's *History of India*, II. 64; Campbell, *ut supra*.

[3] *Mahâbh.*, I.

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Râjahs are indignant at being humbled by a Brahman, whom the maiden chooses for her husband in preference to all her Kshatriya suitors.

Manu, indeed, believed to have been himself a Kshatriya, records the names of kings, who perished by reason of not submitting to Brahmanical *divine right*. But this means only that the spiritual arm claimed and secured mastery over the temporal, in the maturity of both, as it afterwards did in Christendom.

Like every thing Hindu, this worship of a priesthood was hewn out of an abstract conception. With whatever base elements mingled, to whatever ends exploited, the *theory* was that justice could be administered only by just men, and that punishment belonged only to the pure.[1] As the Egyptian priesthood represented the national idea of absolute duty, and exhorted the king on solemn occasions to the use of his power for the public good,[2] so the Brahman was held to be an "incarnation of Dharma, or *Sovereign Right;* born to promote justice and guard the treasure of duties."[3] The king must appoint a Brahman as chief of his ministers.[4] The Brihad declares justice created to rule force (Kshatriya). "Through it the weak shall overcome the strong." Therefore the Brahman was inviolable, world-maker, world-preserver, venerable even to the gods. Horrible transmigrations are the penalty for assaulting him, even with a blade of grass, and barbarous punishments for slaying or mutilating him. The grains of dust wet by his blood are counted as years in the atonement of the murderer.[5] Down at his feet, and

Hindu priesthood ship an ideal.

[1] *Manu*, VII. 30; *Yâjn.*, I. 354.
[2] *Diod. Sicul.*
[3] *Manu.*, I. 98, 99.
[4] Ibid., VII. 58, 59.
[5] Ibid., IX. 314, 316; XI. 84; IV. 166, 168; *Yâjn.*, II. 215.

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ask forgiveness, if you have confuted him in logic. Let him suffer, and the nation perishes. The sea fails, the fire goes out, the moon dwindles, if his prayers and offerings for the people cease. He is the producer, the healer, the deliverer: the world is but the outcome of the virtue of which he is the visible sign. He may violate every rule of caste without sin, to relieve himself from extremity of distress: though the king die of hunger, the Brahman shall not be taxed, his contribution being already infinite. He is venerable from his birth; though a Brahman be but ten years old, and a Kshatriya a hundred, the former is the father, and all things are his.[1]

Its meaning.

To invest individuals or classes with an exclusive divinity belongs to all forms of organized religion hitherto prevalent in the world. And it is easy to show, in this worship of the Brahman which is its typical form, of what folly, superstition, and despotism it is capable. But such criticism, however just, does not explain the facts of history. We would recognize that sentiment, in itself eternally valid, which found crude and blind expression in this old absolutism, so as to give it currency with human nature. What it aspired to, in its imperfect way, is in fact achieved only through the mutual stimulation of free, vigorous, practical races. The question which Brahman worship properly suggests is whether he, whom the progress of civilization has shown to be the *real goal* of that imperfect groping and striving, whether the *true* preserver of states and sustainer of worlds, he whose conscience outraged, whose service stayed or suppressed, is indeed the people's shame

[1] *Manu*, XI. 206; IX. 316; X. 103; II. 135; I. 100.

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and loss, — whether the just citizen, the laborer for universal ideas and uses, has at last adequate recognition and respect. Meantime it is well to note how strong an impulse to this natural veneration underlies the most unpromising features of Hindu life.

Brahmanical absolutism could not have been the mere device of a body of priests, imposed from without on the religious sentiment. Priest and people were alike swayed by a sense of the indispensableness of spiritual help. They comprehend that to bring this is to sustain the world; that social order, custom, inspiration, are derived from this; that the first of duties is to recognize him who has this to give; and that to stay this product is to deal destruction to the people. Here, in the crude ore, is the fine gold of an eternal idea, which these latest ages are still engaged in working out. Here is at least a sincere effort to divinize spiritual help; and the Brahman himself was substantially a believing servant of the impulse, even while he more or less selfishly directed it to effect his own supremacy.

Responsibility of the Brahman.

He wrought out the laws, under a sense of inspiration. He bowed his own neck under the yoke which he laid on the lower castes. This is certainly true, whatever the alloy of priestcraft in his legislation. The theory being that primitive power belonged only to the just, its organ must first master himself.[1] As far as the wretched Chandâla lay beneath this incarnate god, so far the god himself was beneath the law. Let him violate its precepts or disciplines, he shall be turned into a demon whose food is filth, and whose mouth a firebrand.[2] To

[1] *Manu*, VII. 30; *Yâjn.*, I. 354.

[2] *Manu*, XII. 71.

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neglect them is to make way for his own destruction. Dante's Christian Inferno is prefigured in these penalties of Brahmanical sin. "If, as judge, the Brahman shall overturn justice, it shall overturn him: if he extracts not the dart of iniquity from its wounds, he shall himself be wounded thereby."[1] If he begs gifts for a sacrifice, and uses them otherwise than for sacrifice, he shall become a kite or a crow;[2] if he begs from a low-caste man, he shall become an outcast in the next existence; and if he marries a low-caste woman, he degrades his family to her caste, and loses his own.[3] For his marrying a Śudra woman, the law declares there is no expiation.[4] Crimes are specified which will change his nature into that of a Śudra in three days.[5] The law forbids the king to slay him, even though convicted of all possible crimes.[6] Yet it also prescribes his banishment for capital offences, and even declares it permissible to kill him, if he attempts to kill.[7] If he steals, his fine is eight times that of a Śudra; and, if he accepts stolen property, he is punished as the thief.[8] Care is taken indeed that he shall be able to compound for the severest penalties, by milder penance; but the recognition of a higher law than his own will is none the less real, nor are his expiations an easy burden. The Brahmanical bed was not made of roses. The demands of asceticism rose in proportion to one's elevation in caste life, and the Śudra is a freeman by comparison, in the matter of ceremonial bonds.[9] Whatever rights the Brahman possessed over the lives and property of others, the

[1] *Manu*, VIII. 15, 12. [2] Ibid., XI. 24, 25. [3] Ibid., III. 16, 17.
[4] Ibid., III. 19. [5] Ibid., X. 92. [6] Ibid., VIII. 380.
[7] Ibid., VIII. 350. [8] Ibid., VIII. 337, 340.
[9] For some curious effects of this fact on the relations of the castes, see Ludlow's *British India*, I. 57.

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law insisted with energy that he should subdue his passions, be just and merciful, and return good for evil, on penalty of losing all the prerogatives of his birth. He must not gamble, nor sell spirituous liquors, nor indulge any sensual desires. Nor must we estimate lightly the practical power of these saving provisions, and of the religious beliefs from which they sprung. Alexander and his followers found the Indian Gymnosophists "blameless, patient, wise, and just."[1] And the Egyptian priesthood, under analogous disciplines to the Hindu, seem to have won a like reputation in the ancient world. A very interesting little tract was sent to Hodgson, and communicated by him to the Royal Asiatic Society, in which the Buddhist author confutes the doctrine of the castes *out of the mouth of Brahmans themselves;* proving, by a great number of examples drawn from their sacred writings, that Brahmanism cannot be a matter of birth nor race, nor wisdom, nor observance of rites. He shows that many leading Brahmanical authorities were from low-caste mothers, that many Śudras have become Brahmans by their austerities; quotes Manu to the effect that "bad actions will change a Brahman into a Śudra, that virtue is better than lineage, and that royalty without goodness is contemptible and worthless;" also the Mahâbhârata, as saying that the signs of a true Brahman are the possession of truth, mercy, self-command, universal benevolence; and that origi-

[1] Megasthenes, for example (*De Situ Orbis*, ch. xv.), describes the Brahmans as frugal in living: avoiding animal food or sensual pleasure; intent on serious conversation with such as are willing to hear. And Scholasticus, in the fifth century, says of them: "They worship God; never question Providence; always in prayer turning towards the light, wherever it may be; live on what the earth spontaneously brings forth; delight in the sky and woods, and sweet song of the birds; sing hymns to God, and desire a future life." These philosophers were in fact the highest ideals of the Greeks in morality and religion. See Marco Polo, and the Arabian writers on India; also Wuttke, 463, 464.

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nally there was but one caste, the four arising from diversity of rites and vocations. "All men born of woman have the same organs, and are subject to the same wants."[1]

Condition of the Sudra.

These considerations may show the injustice we should do the Hindu caste-system in placing it on a moral level with modern slavery. The Śudras were indeed at the mercy of a fearful system of oppression. Legal penalties for enslaved races were neither more nor less barbarous in the Code of Manu than in the written and unwritten codes of the old Slave States of America. Slitting of tongues, pouring hot oil into mouths and ears, cutting off lips and branding foreheads, are necessary adjuncts of any system which undertakes to make any form of slavery its corner-stone, in old time or new. The thraldom of the Śudra was very distinctly stated. "Though emancipated, he does not become free, since none can divest him of a state which is natural to him."[2] He can possess no property as against a Brahman;[3] and must not accumulate wealth, lest he give trouble to the superior race![4] And a kind of colorphobia, too, certainly underlay the old bondage as it did the later. Whether the Sanskrit word for caste (varna) really points to the color of the skin or not, at present a doubtful question,[5] it is certain that the lowest caste was black, or nearly so. The indigenous races of India, according to good authority, are negrito.[6] As the Dasyas in the Veda are called "black skins," so the Aryas are the "white friends of Indra." It is

[1] *Transac. of Roy. As. Soc.*, III. p. 160.

[2] *Manu*, VIII. 414. [3] Ibid., VIII. 417. [4] Ibid., X. 129.

[5] Muir, II. 374–413; Lassen, I. 407–409; Duncker, II. 55. In the *Rig Veda*, *varna* has the sense of race, tribe, says Schoebel (*Researches*, p. 11).

[6] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology*, in *Jour. Beng. Soc.*, 1866.

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an old sin, this preying of the fair skin on the dark; and, in the overbearing oligarchy of British rule in India, its penalties are falling on the native posterity of those Aryan oppressors.

Difference of Eastern caste and Western slavery.

But there is this difference. The Brahman recognized a higher law than his own gain. The modern slaveholder made his power his law. Caste, in its general outlines, was an outgrowth of the social and religious faith of the East: slaveholding denied and affronted the conscience of the West. Caste rested on a belief in reciprocal duties that held every member of the system under rigid responsibilities and restraints: slaveholding rested on mere force and fraud, and the belief in a reciprocity of duties was exceptional and incidental. Man escapes from both systems not by miraculous intervention of Christianity, but by the deeper forces of his own moral and spiritual nature. As these have driven American slavery to self-destruction, so they have in past times counteracted, and continue to counteract, the worst tendencies of Hindu caste.

Checks to oppression in the caste system. Royalty.

The military and mercantile classes intervened between the Brahman and the Śudra; and a series of mutual checks pervaded the system, which graduated its tyrannies, and mitigated their force. "The king is formed," says Manu, "out of the essence of the eight guardian deities, and exercises their functions. He is ordained protector of all classes in the discharge of their several duties."[1] In the Râmâyana, the king of that model Brahmanical city, Ayodhya, "takes tribute of his subjects, not for his own use, but to return it to them with greater

[1] *Manu*, V. 96; VII. 80, 35.

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beneficence; as the Sun drinks up the ocean, to return it to the earth in vivifying rain."[1] "O Bhârata," says Râma to his brother, "the tears which fall from those who are unjustly condemned will destroy the children and the herds of him who governs with partiality."[2] By the law of Manu, the king is under a responsibility equivalent to his power. The burden of innocent blood shed by the courts falls in large measure on him.[3] He is commanded to proceed mildly in dealing with offences: first by gentle admonition, then by severe reproof, then by fines, then by infliction of corporeal pain; and to use severest methods only as a last resort.[4]

All persons are obliged[5] to adjust their controversies according to the particular laws of their own order, and by reference to those who are familiar with the interests under question: kindred, fellow-artisans, cohabitants of villages, may decide lawsuits, and meetings for the purpose are entitled judicatories. There are judges appointed by the king also in these courts; and an appeal lies from these to higher ones, and finally to the king himself.

He is exhorted to mild and conciliatory discourse towards litigants. The law codes abound in injunctions upon him to adhere to justice by conscientious investigation of the cases brought before his tribunal. He is to appoint a counsellor from the priesthood, who shall check him if he act "unjustly, partially, or perversely." And the judicial assemblies are subject to the same rules. We are reminded of the official oath of the Egyptian judges not to obey the king if he

[1] *Râmâyana*, B. I. [2] Ibid., B. II.
[3] *Manu*, VIII. 18. [4] Ibid., VII. 104; VIII. 129.
[5] These rules for the administration of justice are taken from Colebrooke's elaborate Digest of Hindu Law. See *Trans. of Roy. As. Soc.*, vol. ii. pp. 174–194.

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should command them to act unjustly. By Hindu law, the judge who sits silent and does not deliver his real opinion is deemed guilty of deliberate falsehood. The unjust judge is to be fined twice the penalty involved in the suit, and shall make good the loss to the injured party. The king shall appoint for the trial of causes only persons who are "gentle and tender rather than austere, and who are wise, cheerful, and disinterested."

The *poetic* ideal of Hindu royalty is found in Kâlidâsa's King Atithi, who, "even when young on the throne, was invincible through the love of his people; who spoke no vain words, nor recalled what he had given, inconsistent only in this, that, having overturned enemies, he lifted them again from the earth; seeking only what was practicable, as fire attacks not water, though the wind is its servant to consume the forest; amassing riches, only because gold gives power to help the unhappy; loving honest ways even in war; making travellers as safe as in their own homes; sending the poorest from his presence enabled to be generous to others, as the clouds come back from their voyages over the sea; making enemies feel the infection of his virtue."[1]

Looseness of the laws.

The severest caste-laws must have been inoperative, as the numberless contradictions and absurdities of the code amply manifest. It is certain that the cruelties made legal in Manu could never have been inflicted by any physical power which the priesthood could have possessed; and, as we have seen, it is matter of serious doubt whether this legislation ever had very extended recognition in India. To learn the actual condition of things, we must resort to other wit-

[1] *Raghuvansa*, XVII.

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nesses. I have already alluded to the testimony of Greeks who visited India before the Christian era, to the excellence of royal and judicial administration. They report further that the courts judged without reference to any written code whatever; and such is to a great extent the case at the present time, local usages taking the place of positive written statutes.[1]

Interchangeableness of the castes.

Practically, the lines of caste were always ill-defined, shifting like waves of sand blown by the winds of the desert; a constant satire on its pretensions to immobility. Inter-marriage has always been permitted, and some of the mixed classes have been treated with respect. Colebrooke, in a valuable paper on the subject, has described the disintegration of fixed orders in Hindu society, and the breaking down of its "impassable walls" of caste by this subdivision into mixed classes. They were "multiplied to endless variety" at a very early epoch; so that it seems hardly possible that the division into four distinct classes could have really prevailed in India for any great length of time.

The higher castes could, in case of necessity, assume the occupations of the lower; and the Śudra could not only engage in trades belonging to the class above him, but even "gain exaltation in this world and the next, by performing certain lawful acts of the twice born men."[2] "In fact almost every occupation, though regularly the profession of a particular class, is open to most other classes. The only limitation is in the exclusive right of the Brahmans to teach the Vedas, and perform religious ceremonies."[3]

[1] Maine, *Village Communities*, p. 52.
[2] *Manu*, X. 8:, 96–99, 128; *Yâjn.*, III. 35.
[3] Colebrooke, in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. v.

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One may often, we are told,[1] see carpenters of five or six different low castes employed on the same building; and the same diversity may be observed among the craftsmen in dockyards, and on all other great works. Manu's caste laws are perpetually violated, even those to which the severest penalties are attached. It is well known that the Bengal army has been composed of high-caste Hindus, mostly Brahmans, as the Madras army is composed of low-caste men, and a Brahman may even be a private under a low-caste officer; an assertion of natural democracy as little likely to be relished in India as the authority of a negro general by scions of first families in America, yet equally inevitable in both cases. Men of low castes have been princes and had Brahmans in their service.[2] "The President of the Dharmasabhâ at Calcutta is a Śudra, while the secretary is a Brahman. Three-quarters the Brahmans in Bengal are servants."[3] High-caste cooks are said to be in great demand in the army, and in native families. The rules of Brahmanical purity make it far easier for the high-caste man to become servant to the low, than the reverse.[4] And this intermixture of caste functions has gone on from very early times, leading to an elaborate chapter of regulations in Manu.

Every thing in climate and ethnic constitution tended to favor this system in India; yet even there the force of justice in human nature has been too strong for it, and shown a transforming energy that is marvellous. Such testimonies suggest that the resort to supernaturalism, either to explain man's past or guarantee his future progress out of the barbarism of caste in

[1] Rickards, *India*, I. 32.
[2] Müller's *Chips*, II. 350.
[3] Allen's *India*, p. 472.
[4] Ludlow, I. 57.

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any form, is wholly gratuitous. They have thus a bearing on the adequacy of Natural Religion to the explanation of history, which makes them of great interest in the present state of inquiry on that subject.

Democratic reactions.

Strong centrifugal and disintegrative tendencies have revealed themselves in the very structure of the system, affording ample proof that the free impulses of nature in which its first foundations were laid refused to yield either to priestcraft or social pride. "Manu's classification never passed in its integrity," says Mr. Hunter, "beyond the middle land of India. On the east where Lower Bengal begins, caste, as a fourfold classification, ceases. It never crossed the Indus on the west. Beyond this the tribes held all men equal."[1] In Northern India, at the present day, all castes mix socially together, even where separated by religious distinctions, or diversity of functions.[2] In the South, Śudras rank next to Brahmans; and their name has never had the degrading sense which is given it in Manu's Laws.[3] In truth the old doctrine of four distinct castes has no longer a semblance of validity anywhere. The ancient Śudras and Vaiśyas are absorbed into the infinite diversity of mixed castes, now no longer treated with contempt.[4] So are the old Dasyus of the Veda. Brahman cultivators are numerous in Western India, and in Oude outnumber all others; and the chief traders, civil officers, and writers in the Panjâb[4] are descendants of the Kshatriya, or soldier class. "The Vaiśya caste," says Ludlow, "has almost wholly disappeared. The Kshatriya (as soldier) exists perhaps

[1] *Annals of Rural Bengal*, pp. 102, 104. [2] Campbell, p. 136.
[3] See Monier Williams's *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit*.
[4] Campbell on *Indian Ethnology*.

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only among the Râjputs of the north-western frontier; the Śudra, scarcely anywhere but among the Yâts and Mahrattas. Only the Brahman holds his ground; and beneath him a chain of castes, varying almost infinitely in number according to locality, seldom less than seventy, and averaging a hundred. In Malabar are enumerated three hundred."[1] And of the Brahmans Wilson tells us that "they have universally deviated from their original duties and habits;" that "as a hierarchy they are null; as a literary body, few, and meet with slender countenance from their countrymen;" that "they have ceased to be the advisers of the people;" and that "various sects have arisen which denounce them as impostors."[2] The gosains and fakeers have succeeded to the old Brahmanical sway, and generally contemn these subordinations of the ancient system, which one reformer after another has assailed, from Gotama Buddha to the present day. The most national religious festival in India, that of Jagannâth in Orissa, has always rejected caste. "No one in India," says Max Müller, "is ashamed of his caste; and the lowest Pariah is as proud and anxious to preserve his own as the highest Brahman. Sudras throw away their cooking vessels as defiled, if a Brahman enters the house."[3] Sir H. Elliott, in his valuable work upon the races of North-Western India, supplies conclusive evidence on the failure of caste to maintain its principle of immobility in that region. "The attempt of early lawgivers to divide society into classes, which should hold no communion with each other, was one which broke down at an early period. Even in India 'love will be lord of all.' The plan of

[1] *British India*, I. 48; Elliott, *Races of N. W. India*, I. p. 166.
[2] *Religious Sects of the Hindus*, 1862. [3] *Chips*, II. 347.

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degrading the issue of mixed castes has been highly beneficial. It is like the disintegration of granite till it forms fertile soil. In practice, a man who had a Brahman or Râjput for father was not likely to be ashamed of it, or to be looked down on by his fellow-men; and the barriers of caste once overstepped, that mixture and fusion of the people began which has gone on to our day, and promises to continue till there shall be no remnant of caste left. A laconic modern proverb in North Behar says, 'Caste is rice;' *i.e.*, matter of eating or not eating with others, only. It is a hopeful sign, presaging, like the Brahmô Somaj, a new and better order of things in India."[1] One or two more witnesses will suffice.

Says the author of "Rural Annals of Bengal:" "That the time foretold in the Sanskrit Book of the Future, when the Indian people shall be of one caste and form one nation, is not far off, no one who is acquainted with the Bengalis of the present day can doubt. They have about them the capabilities of a noble nation." Finally, Maine does not hesitate to say that caste is now "merely a name for trade or occupation;"[2] and Monier Williams asserts that "however theoretically strict, it practically resolves itself into a question of rupees."[3] Caste, in Ceylon as well as in India, is now in fact a purely social distinction, and disconnected from any sanction derived from religious belief.[4]

The *Drama* has given expression to the democratic

[1] Elliott, I. p. 167. [2] *Village Communities*, p. 57.

[3] *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit* (1861). He mentions the fact that, a few years before, it was decided at a meeting of Old and New School Hindus in Calcutta that certain young Brahmans, who had lost caste, should be readmitted on paying a large fine and performing purification.

[4] Tennent, *Christianity in India*, p. 91.

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spirit in India, — as it did to the opening of modern liberties in Europe, — by protest against the pride of caste, which is in fact but the *feudalism of the East*. The Mrichchikâti,[1] for instance, describes the social contempt that befalls poverty, in indignant language, as suitable to the Western as to the Eastern world: — Shown in literature.

"This is the curse of slavery, to be disbelieved when you speak the truth.

"The poor man's truth is scorned: the wealthy guests look at him with disdain; he sneaks into a corner.

"Believe me, he who incurs the crime of poverty adds a sixth sin to those we term most hideous.

"Disgrace is in misconduct: a worthless rich man is contemptible."

The same play brings out a Brahman thief who uses his *sacred thread*, "that useful appendage to a Brahman," to measure the walls he would scale, and to open the doors he would force. It ridicules a Brahman pandit, "stuffed with curds and rice, chanting a Veda-Hymn; a pampered parrot." A king is, in another passage, represented as commanding the impalement of a priest. Again, the brother of a slain king, dragged about by a mob, is set free by the forgiveness of the subject he would have put to death unjustly. A slave is shown as a model of integrity, and made to say, "Kill me, if you will: I cannot do what ought not to be done." A chandâla, the lowest of all outcasts, when ordered to execute a supposed criminal, replies: —

"My father, when about to depart to heaven, said to me: 'Son, whenever you have a culprit to execute, proceed slowly; for perhaps some good man may buy the criminal's liberation; perhaps

[1] Translated by Wilson.

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a son may be born to the king, and a general pardon be proclaimed; perhaps an elephant may break loose, and the prisoner escape in the confusion; or perhaps a change of rulers may take place, and every one in bondage may be set free.' "[1]

The lower castes have established claims to respect in other ways. In Ceylon they have been the only astronomers, and amidst their astrological fancies attained a certain amount of scientific knowledge, calculating eclipses and noting the periods of the stars.[2]

Influence of the native tribes.

It is probable that the intercourse of the Aryans with native tribes has helped to weaken and disintegrate the caste system. The very ancient popular rites in honor of serpents, doubtless of agricultural origin, and celebrated throughout India, in which all classes unite, amidst holiday pleasures, prove that a democratic influence has proceeded from the aboriginal races. Most of these tribes have always been free from caste; many have bravely resisted the invader among their rocky fastnesses, maintaining a heroic independence. And, with all their barbarism, many of them have shown primitive virtues which ignore conventional distinctions among men. The Bheels are described as "more honest than the Aryan Hindus," and their women as having a higher position than those of the latter race, and taking part actively in all reforms in behalf of order and industry.[3] The Khonds believe that to break an oath, or repudiate a debt, or refuse hospitality, is to invite the wrath of the gods.[4] Another writer speaks of "the kindly spirit of the Kols towards each other." "The Kol girl is never abusive: her vocabulary is as

[1] Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, vol. i.
[2] See Upham's *Sacred Books of Ceylon*, Introd. xiv.
[3] Mrs. Spier's *India*. [4] Lassen, I. 377, 378.

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free from bad language of this kind as a Bengali's is full of it."[1] "The whole Santhal village," says Hunter, "has joys and sorrows in common. It works together, hunts together, worships together, eats together. No man is allowed to make money out of a stranger."[2] In the interesting work here quoted, the democratic "village-system," which extends over a large portion of India, is traced back to the aboriginal tribes. They must, at all events, have shared it from the earliest period with the Aryan immigrants. Ludlow[3] depicts them in general terms as "savages, with scarcely a rag to cover them, yet honest and truthful, as all free races are." "A tithe of the care and benevolence expended on the Hindus," says a still more recent writer,[4] "would make the hill races a noble and enlightened people." However strong some of these expressions may seem, the unanimity of the best observers points at least to a strong democratic force as working from this direction on the Hindu social system.

Such the force of democratic reaction within this oldest system of social wrongs, — a system which has generally been taken as type of their unchangeableness under heathen influences. Such the protest that began with its beginning, and steadily smote against its iron joints till it broke them in pieces; not indeed introducing liberty, but preparing the way for it by dividing the bondage to an indefinite extent, atomizing the elements as it were for better affinities. And this old Brahmanical code, wrecked and stranded by the sacred instinct of freedom, bears witness that

[1] *Bengal Journal*, 1866. [2] *Annals of Rural Bengal*, pp. 202, 208, 216.
[3] *British India*, I. 19.
[4] Lewins, *Races of S. E. India*, 349; also *Journal Bengal Society* (1866), II. 151.

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man was always greater than his own theocracies, oligarchies, or despotisms, of whatever kind, and will never abide in them as in his home.

Positive rights of lower castes.

But further, so far as was possible amidst a series of changes like these, each caste has always really stood by itself in political matters, managing its affairs by its own suffrage; and even the lowest have always had, notwithstanding the *theory* of the law, certain well-understood and well-defined civil rights, such as that of acquiring and bestowing property, learning to read, and performing certain sacrifices.[1] Caste usages have even been found to resemble in some respects the ancient popular institutions of the European Teutonic tribes. Slavery itself, in many parts of India, has helped to equalize caste, since men of all castes could become slaves, and a Brahman might serve a Śudra; while, in Malabar, slaves, in their turn, have had higher social consideration than some of the free castes.[2]

Slavery.

Slavery in India must be distinguished from caste. It stands on a wholly different basis and originates in causes of a more superficial nature. According to the Mohammedan law, there is but *one* justifiable ground of enslavement; namely, punishment of infidels fighting against the true faith. According to the Hindus, *fifteen* causes are enumerated, among which voluntary or involuntary *self-sale* is the substance of several, and punishment that of others.[3] The strong language of the law concerning a slave's natural destitution of rights received in fact many important qualifications. He could be manumitted; if he saved his master's life, he could demand his free-

[1] Buyers's *Northern India*, 314, 457; Allen, *India*, 471.
[2] Adam, *Slavery in India*, 131–133.
[3] Adam; Macnaghten's *Hindu and Mohammedan Law.*

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dom and the portion of a son; if the only son of his master, both his slave mother and himself became free by virtue of that condition alone; when enslaved for special causes, voluntarily or otherwise, his bondage ceased with the cessation of its grounds.[1] Contracts made by slaves in the name of an absent master, for the behoof of the family, could not be rescinded by him; nor was there any bar to the institution of judicial proceedings by a slave against his master; nor, in practice, to the reception of his testimony thereon.[2] We must observe, too, that slavery in India has not been as in the West an incident of race, but attached alike to *all races*, and even to all classes in society. It was therefore impossible that the relation as such should be held, as in Christian countries, to be something organic and essential in its victim.

Distinction of Eastern from Western slavery.

Notwithstanding Hindu laws speak of slaves as mere cattle, though they could be transferred with the soil, or sold from hand to hand, and though their condition, especially in Southern India, has been past description miserable and degraded,[3] yet it may fairly be said that slavery, in the sense in which we have been used to understand the word, has not existed in India.[4] It does not claim in that country to rest on religious foundations.[5] Chief Justice Harrington distinctly declared that "the law and usage of slavery had no immediate connection with religion," and that its abolition would not shock the religious prejudices of the people. Manumission

[1] Colebrooke, in Macnaghten, p. 130.

[2] *Manu*, VIII. 167; Adam, p. 17.

[3] See the accounts given by Adam; and in a valuable pamphlet on *Slavery in India* (printed in London by Thomas Ward & Co., 1841), full of statistics drawn from official documents, originally prepared for the *Morning Chronicle*.

[4] Buyers, 314, 315.

[5] Macnaghten, p. 128.

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itself, on the other hand, is regarded as an act of piety expiative of offences; and by the Mohammedan law it is expressly commended as a religious merit. The form in which slavery appeared in ancient India was so mild that the Greeks refused it the name; Megasthenes declaring definitely that "there are no slaves in India," and Arrian that "all Hindus are free." And even in later times and in regions of which these writers had no knowledge, it is not easy to find among the Hindus the abstract idea of chattelhood, as Western ingenuity has wrought it out. Everywhere, for example, are traces of the right of the slave to inheritance; while the "Law of Nature," as the Romans called those ancient ethnic customs which had a universal scope, was always favorable to his claims.[1] I venture to affirm that nothing of the exact nature of Western slavery *as an idea* existed in the older East, either among the Hebrews, the Persians, the Chinese, or the Hindus. The systematic reduction of men to things could hardly have been conceived by these instinctive races. It belongs to socially self-conscious generations, who know enough of ideal freedom to comprehend what the negation of it implies. It is a satanic fall made possible only by a mature sense of personal rights. The earliest approach to it, so far as I know, was by polished ethical philosophers of Greece.[2]

Appeal of caste to ontology.

But there is a family likeness in the forms of slavery in all races and times. And that theoretic basis which could not quite reach the absolutism of Western bondage was, within the limits of caste, developed with extreme precision. The idea

[1] Maine's *Ancient Law*, 158–160.

[2] Aristotle's *Politics*, B. 1. ch. 4–6.

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of caste everywhere rests upon an abstract postulate of organic differences among men.[1] Thus, in Manu, it is the "nature" of a Brahman to read Vedas, to pray, to be adored. It is the "nature" of a Kschatriya to fight, of a Vaiśya to labor, of a Śudra to serve. This belief grew up insensibly, as the system became fixed, and its distinctions hereditary. Then the Brahmanical priesthood went further, by a necessary law of development. With those subtle brains of theirs, they spun out an *ontology of caste*. The laboring class represented the physical world of *action*, in their philosophy an unreality, a kingdom of obscurity and delusion. The soldier caste represented the *will*, which struggles up out of this lower region, and maintains itself in contradistinction therefrom. The Brahmans themselves represented the purely *spiritual realm*, the only real life, absorbed in deity. As for the lowest caste, it lay outside the world of ideas, an opposite pole of negation; though even here it would seem that *no absolute evil* was affirmed, since from the lowest caste one might rise into the highest through transmigration. Thus it was attempted to justify a colossal servitude by the structure of the soul and the constitution of the universe. To us the chief value of this attempt is in its illustration of the necessity which compels every form of injustice to render account to the natural sense of justice in mankind. Mere power never sufficed to vindicate any despotic system in the sight of man. And in this fact lay guaranteed from the first an ultimate real perception and appreciation of social ethics. The ceaseless en-

[1] See Grote, on Plato's "guardians," or "golden and silver men," and on the way in which they would necessarily regard the "brass and iron" natures, ordained to lower functions and destinies. Grote's *Plato*, III. 214.

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forcement of all institutions to plead their cause at the ideal bar of conscience leads at last, without need of miracle, to a true commonwealth.

It was inevitable that caste should be driven in India, as slavery has been in America, to justify its falsity upon abstract grounds of nature and right. To this theoretic test it has to come, whether a thousand years before Christ or two thousand years after him. And the appeal to ontological defences was its refutation, just as we have since seen it to be the suicide of American slavery.

For a deeper dialectic came to rebut them. And Brahmanism was driven, on its own logical ground, to the utter denial of its own social principle. This result came to pass in the Buddhist reaction. For Buddhism was the abolition *upon recognized* metaphysical as well as moral principles, of all distinctions founded on caste, and the consequent affirmation of universal brotherhood. And from this Brahmanical caste has never fully recovered. So close lay truth to honest error, so inevitable was the appeal to pure reason three thousand years ago. The history of this reaction will claim our attention at a subsequent stage of these studies.

Democratic tendencies in the Hindu mind.

But we may go behind the spirit of caste, to far nobler tendencies in the Hindu mind. The old Vedic Hymns do not recognize it at all. The names afterwards given the three upper castes are found in these hymns, but not as indicative of social distinctions. Brahmana is appellative of prayer; Kshatriya, of force; and Viś, whence Vaiśya, of the people in a general sense. Indeed the old pastoral Aryans, as we have seen, were a very democratic community. They seem to have known no dis-

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tinctions resembling those defined in Manu. The householder had his chosen seer, like the Hebrew, or might himself offer sacrifices as the head of his family.[1] The epics speak not only of Brahmans who descended from soldiers, and of Vaiśyas taking part in government, but of times when the whole population assembled to ratify the nomination of a King.[2] In the Mahâbhârata,[3] King Judhishthira is inaugurated by the united action of all the castes. So the Râmâyana tells us that Daśaratha called a great council of all his ministers and chieftains to discuss the appointment of a son to share the government; and that all the people were gathered together in like manner to express their preference, and give their advice. The divine Râma is the ideal of a democratic prince. His sanctity in the epic is itself a transference of the ideal of religion from the Brahman to the Kshatriya; an affirmation of liberty on this soil of caste. The chiefs praise him for continually "inquiring after the welfare of the citizens, as if they were his own children, afflicted at their distresses and rejoicing in their joy, upholding the law by protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty; so that all the people, whether they be servants or bearers of burdens, citizens or ryots, young or old, petition the monarch to install Râma as coadjutor in the administration of the Ráj."[4] Râma's brother Bhârata, seeking to move him from his determination to yield the crown, in obedience to his father's vow, as a last resort appeals to the people. "Why, O people! do you not lay your injunction on Râma?" And the

[1] Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 37; Lassen, I. 795.
[2] Lassen, I. 811.
[3] Mahâbhârata, B. II.
[4] Râmâyana, B. II.

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people reply that they find reason on both sides, and cannot judge the matter in haste.

The people were from the first divided into little clans under independent chiefs. Down to this day the tribes of the Panjâb, that oldest homestead of the Hindu Aryans, remain free from consolidated monarchy and caste.[1]

A quarter of the population of India, about fifty millions, are governed by about two hundred native chiefs. Such is the force of the centrifugal principle of local independence.[2] Small, self-governed communities, adhering to local customs and traditions, and organized in guilds and corporations, exist all over India, even under the shadow of royalty and caste, persistent protests in many ways against the authority of these institutions.[3] The type of this free spirit is the Sikh, whose Bible says: —

"They tell us there are four races; but all are of the seed of Brahm.

"The four races shall be one, and all shall call on the Teacher.

"Think not of caste, but abase thyself, and attend to thy own soul."

Title to the land.

Originally the full title of the laborer to the soil was religiously conceded. "The old sages declare that cultivated land is the property of him who first cut away the wood or cleared and tilled it, just as an antelope belongs to the first hunter by whom it is mortally wounded.[4] Even the feudalism of the Râjput princes still acknowledges the ryot's ownership in the land.[5] This natural hold upon the soil and the right of self-government consequent thereon have been

[1] See Weber, p. 3.
[2] *Westm. Rev.*, July, 1859.
[3] Duncker, II. 105; Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 52.
[4] *Manu*, IX. 44.
[5] *Asiatic Journal*, New Series, V. 41.

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embodied by the Hindus from remote times in what are called the "Village Communities."[1]

By this system the land is held by the village commune as an organized whole, having complete arrangements for distributing the produce among the laborers, after the payment of a certain small fraction, differing at different times, to the king and the local chiefs. The village has its arable land cultivated by all, and its waste land used by all as pasture. It has its judge or head-man, appointed by the râja in the old time, but now a hereditary officer. He is the agent of the village in all transactions with the government, the assessor of taxes according to property, and the manager of the common lands. Yet all matters of moment are determined by "free consultation with the villagers, and disputes decided with the assistance of arbitrators."[2] Village communities.

The organization of the little commonwealth is complete; having its judge, its collector, its superintendent of boundaries, its notary public, its weigher and gauger; its guide for travellers, its priest, schoolmaster, astrologer; its watch and police; its barber, carpenter, smith, potter, tailor, spice-seller; its letter-carrier, irrigator, and burner of the dead; all functions being hereditary in most villages, and all work paid for out of the common fund.[3] Within the limits of Oriental instincts this little community is an independent unit; a "petty republic;" containing within itself all the elements of stability and mutual satisfaction; organ-

[1] "The right of the sovereign extended only to the tax. Theoretically, he was owner of every thing acquired by his subjects; but practically they had their rights, as fully secured as his own." Ritchie, *British World in the East*, I. 179.

[2] See Wheeler, *History of British India*, II. 597. Hunter's *Orissa*, (1872) vol. ii.

[3] Mill, *British India*, I. 217; Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II. 259; *Westm. Review* for July, 1859; Ludlow, *Brit. India*, I. 61.

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ized for the security and profit of each family in the position hereditarily or otherwise assigned it, and according to the recognized measure of its contribution to the public service. And these villages, it may be added, have from very ancient times been, not infrequently, bound together into larger organizations, containing generally eighty-four members.[1] They are an admirable illustration of the principle of *Mutual Help*, and of its controlling influence over mankind in the early organization of social life. The members of such primeval republics, of which India itself has been styled "one vast congeries," have no other traditions of political duty than what this form of government has transmitted from immemorial antiquity. "They trouble themselves very little about the dismemberment of empires; and, provided the township remain intact, it is matter of perfect indifference to them who becomes sovereign of the country, the internal administration continuing the same."[2] The system in fact rests on principles that may not only be called congenital with actual Hindu tribes, but go back to more primitive social relations. The tie which unites the members of these village communities involves, as Maine has shown in his remarkable work on Ancient Law, the assumption of a common family descent, suggesting unmistakably their origin in Patriarchalism, the earliest constructive principle of social life. The same profound student, in a more recent volume of equal interest, has added to his previous parallel between the Indian communities and the Russian and Slavonian village-brotherhoods, a

[1] Elliott, *N. W. India*, II. p. 4.

[2] Wilkes's *Historical Sketches of the South of India.* See Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II. 260.

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description of the very close resemblance of the first-named organizations to the old Teutonic townships, — a resemblance "much too strong to be accidental," — and especially in their presenting "the same double aspect of a group of families united by common kinship, and a company of persons exercising joint ownership of land."[1] These Indo-European affinities will of course suggest to the reader a common origin in the primeval life of the race previous to its dispersion into different nationalities.

Their liberties.

Mr. Maine infers from the character of village communities, as well as from other data, that the oldest discoverable forms of property in land are collective rather than individual ownerships;[2] though he finds a periodical redistribution of the land among *families* to have been universal among Aryan races.[3] The Hindu villager's idea of freedom is certainly associated with the rights of the corporate body of which he is a member, rather than with personal independence, and the notion of his own individuality as a limitation of these traditional corporate rights is substantially new to him. The idea is doubtless profoundly alterative of this whole system, now subjected to the influence of European ideas and institutions. Yet the defect of personal freedom is by no means so great as might be inferred; since these corporate rights constitute the natural body of political consciousness, assuming the form of organic guaranties and sacred trusts. The Family, moreover, has its sphere, within which the commune does not penetrate, protected in part by patriarchal traditions of very great sanctity. Personal property is by no means

[1] *Village Communities in the East and the West*, pp. 12, 107, 127.
[2] Ibid., p. 76. [3] Ibid., p. 82.

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excluded from the system; and even the arable land, though owned by all, is marked off to different cultivators, by more or less permanent arrangements.

It is to be observed, too, that the absorption of proprietary rights in land by the commune is by no means universal in the Hindu villages. Whole races, like the Jâts, spread over Northern and Central India, are described[1] as thoroughly democratic; as having an "excessive craving for fixed ownership in the land," of which every one has his separate share, while the government is not patriarchal, but to a very great degree representative. On the Western coast, and in the broken hilly regions especially, the land is largely held by private ownership.[2] And the isolated homestead so natural to the Teutonic races is in fact very common in India, notwithstanding the strong tendency of an agricultural population like the Hindu, to seek the advantages of a communal system of cultivation.[3] Seventy years ago, Sir Thomas Munro found the lands in Kanara owned by individuals subject to government assessments, who inherited their estates; and "who understood property rights as well as Englishmen."[4]

Râmaswami Naidu, a native official, of reputation in the British service, prepared a careful memoir of the tenures of those ancient States which came to be included in the Madras Presidency.[5] It contains full evidence that, under the native sovereigns of India, a portion of the cultivators possessed full proprietary rights in the soil, while another portion merely paid a tribute to the kings in return for protection, according

[1] See Campbell's elaborate account of *Indian Ethnology*, in the *Journal of the Bengal Society* for 1866.

[2] Campbell, p. 83, 134.

[3] Maine, *Village Communities*, p. 114.

[4] See *Westm. Rev.*, Jan. 1868.

[5] *Journal R. A. S.*, vol. i. 292–306.

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to a fixed proportion of their products. It gives us also a full description of the constitution of a village community, and of the eighteen salaried officers hereditarily attached to it; of their appointment by the king in newly conquered territories, and of the distribution of free proprietorships among the clearers of the land. "This ownership," says the author, "the cultivators enjoy to this day, because hereditary right to the soil is vested in them."[1]

Absolute equality is no part of the ideal of a Hindu commune. There are "parallel social strata;" and in many parts of India outcast classes are attached to the villages, probably belonging to indigenous conquered races. Yet even these outsiders are held authoritative on the subject of boundaries; and the letter-carrier and burner of the dead, who usually belongs to the lowest class, is, like the other functionaries, a free proprietor, with official fees.[2] The people freely discuss laws and customs; nor can the constant intermixture of races of more or less democratic tendency, which has been going on for ages all over India, have failed to supply elements of individuality to Hindu life. It has already been observed that the village system is by no means an exclusively Aryan institution in India, but indigenous also;[3] and, even where it is predominantly Aryan, the native tribes have been quite freely incorporated into its membership, and shared its elements of political equality. This hospitality is so characteristic, that the natural working of the system is probably preferable in such respects to the changes introduced by foreign interference, which,

[1] Wilson (*Hist. India*, I. 418) declares distinctly that "the proprietary right of the sovereign derives no warrant from the ancient laws or institutions of the Hindus."

[2] Râmasw. Naidu. [3] Hunter's *Orissa*, vol. i.

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in Maine's view, has induced a more jealous corporate exclusiveness, clinging to vested rights, than had previously existed.[1] Looking at the history of the institution as a whole, we may discern hints and openings, which promise to throw much light on the subject of *individual freedom*, as an element of Hindu civilization. The breaking up of the old caste-system on the one hand, and the persistence of these local liberties and unities of the agricultural communes on the other, are facts of great historical significance, in estimating the degree in which the idea of personal rights and duties is probably already developed among the races of India. The extent to which the communes have absorbed Brahmans and Kshatriyas into the class of cultivators opens the further question, how much this permanent devotion to agricultural industry may have done towards counteracting the exclusiveness of caste.

The village community is now affirmed to have been the primitive political unit in all Aryan tribes. These little Indian republics have been truly characterized as "the indestructible atoms out of which empires were formed." Many of the largest cities of India were originally collections of these villages. Every successive master of the soil has been compelled to respect them, as the real "proprietary units" with which his authority must deal. Wherever the English have abolished them, the people have returned to them at the earliest opportunity. Their extension, not only over all India, Aryan and native, but even beyond Java,[2] makes them the ground fact of Oriental history, and especially interpretative of Hindu character. And,

[1] *Village Communities*, p. 167.
[2] Raffles, quoted by Heeren, II. 260.

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after trying all their own bungling and barbarous forms of political surgery, the latest experimenters in governing India find the main features of this ancient polity best suited to the genius of the race, and most consistent with social order. It has been an admirable preparation for that system of full personal proprietorship, which should long ere now have been accorded to the Hindu people.[1]

Education.

The school-master is an essential member of this system; and by virtue of his function enjoys a lot of tax-free land by gift of the commune.

"In every Hindu village which has retained its old form, I am assured," says Ludlow, "that the children generally are able to read, write, and cipher; but where we have swept away the village system, as in Bengal, there the village school also has disappeared."[2]

Juries.

Trial by jury (*panchâyet*), alike for the determination of law and fact, is generally a part of this system of self-government; as is also a special service for the discovery of criminals, and the escorting of travellers. Mr. Reynolds, who was employed for many years in suppressing Thuggery, testified in the highest praise to the vigilance of the village police, and to the aid afforded him in tracking offenders sometimes for hundreds of miles. He went so far as to call the village system of India "the best in the world."[3]

[1] For a full account of the village land-tenures, see Mackay's *Reports on Western India*.

[2] *British India*, I. 62. In Bengal alone there were once no less than eighty thousand native schools; though, doubtless, for the most part, of a poor quality. According to a government Report in 1835, there was a village school for every four hundred persons. *Missionary Intelligencer*, IX. 133, 193.

[3] Ludlow, I. 66; II. 344.

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The *panchâyet* juries vary in their composition, and in the number of their members. Originally each party named two, and the judge one. It is a common saying in India, "In the *panchâyet* is God." And, though not always incorrupt, its administration is, according to good authority, on the whole "singularly just." The influence of the elders of the village often induces contending parties to yield points of difference, or even to forgive the injury.[1]

In Nepâl, both civil and criminal cases are referred to the panchâyets, at the discretion of the court, or the wish of the parties; the members being always appointed by the judge, each party having the right of challenge in case of every man nominated. The parties, in other cases, name each five members, and the court adds five to their ten. The verdict must be unanimous, to effect a decision of the case. These jurors are never paid any compensation for travelling expenses or loss of time. The prisoner can always confront his accuser, and cross-examine the witnesses against him. The witness is commonly sworn on the *Harivansa*, which is placed on his head with a solemn reminder of the sanctity of truth. If a Buddhist, he is sworn on the Pancharaksha; if a Moslem, on the Koran. If parties are dissatisfied with the judgment of the courts at law, they can appeal to the ministers assembled in the palace at Kathmandu; applying first to the premier, and, if failing to obtain satisfaction from him, proceeding to the palace gate and calling out, "Justice! Justice!" Upon which fourteen officers are assembled to hear the case, and give final judgment.[2]

[1] Elliott, *N. W. India*, I. 282. [2] Hodgson, in *Journal R. As. Soc.*, vol. i.

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The Hindu mind, then, retained the natural bias towards republicanism which was so distinctly shown in the Aryans of Vedic times, and which reached such energetic growth in the Teutonic races of the same stem. Neither the hot sky of Central India, nor the caste system, which it stimulated to such rankness, could eradicate this germ. Its fires constantly broke forth in organized efforts to expel the Mussulman invader from the soil. The formidable Mahratta confederacy, which came near overthrowing first the Mogul, and then the British empires in India, was a military republic of independent chiefs, loosely related to a central authority. The Sikhs, or *disciples*, at first peaceful religious puritans, became, when roused by Moslem persecution, ardent apostles of political liberty. Even after the long and bloody struggle which ended in the subjugation of the peninsula by England, there still remained the energy to combine in one immense revolt against a foreign despotism that had been peeling the land and demoralizing the race for more than a century; and to compel the government to deprive the colossal East India Company of autocratic power. A brief notice of some of the most important features of British rule in India, which, it must be remembered, have been succeeded by much better methods, will be here introduced, not in a censorious spirit towards the people of England, for whom I cherish a most cordial respect, but because such a review will enable the reader to do something like justice to the natural qualities of the Hindus, and to judge whether their degeneracy, so much harped on, is, as we are constantly told, owing to viciousness specially inherent in the heathen heart.

Republican tendencies.

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Foreign mis-government; land system.

The English systems of land tenure and taxation have been more prejudicial to the rights of the village communes than the Mahommedan which they superseded. Under the latter, the zemindars, or farmers of revenue, took from a fourth to a half the produce of the ryot, in the government's name, paying themselves out of the revenue thus exacted. The English transformed the zemindars into positive owners, who paid quit-rent to the Company, and were armed with powers of summary distraint on the tenants; a system involving the utter extinction of native rights, which had still lingered, favored by the general irregularity of the Mussulman administration.[1] The presidencies of Bengal and Madras becoming impoverished by this policy, the Ryotwaree system was tried, in which the zemindars were supplanted by the government tax-gatherers, levying directly on the villagers; and this proved as fruitful of corruption, extortion, and outrage as the other.[2] The bribe which would often deliver the ryot from the clutch of the Mussulman collector would not assuage the rapacity of his Christian successor. The one was generally content with payment in kind, but the other insisted on having money; thus not only throwing the peasant into the grasp of usurers, so that he was at last obliged to alienate his land, but also draining the country of precious metals, to enrich a foreign company.[3] The older taxation took a portion of the *actual* crop; but the English "fixed an *assumed* capacity of each field for produce, and an assumed price for this, and then from 35 to 40 per cent of this fixed

[1] See *Westm. Rev.*, Jan. 1858.
[2] Ludlow, Lect. IX.
[3] Ibid; McCulloch's *East Indies.*

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sum as its share for ever."[1] The effect was to absorb the larger part of the ryot's actual income, and in general to sweep away the whole. From the time of Clive,[2] the material exhaustion and social misery went on steadily increasing, until, as in the Putteedaree plan, which was adopted in the Panjâb, isolated efforts were made towards a partial return to the native village polity.

British India Society.

In 1838, by the exertions of many leading reformers, conspicuous among whom were George Thompson and Daniel O'Connell, the "British India Society" was organized, — a natural offshoot from the great movement against Western slavery, — for the purpose of emancipating the masses in Hindustan, and at the same time, through the development of the culture of cotton in that country by free labor, to abolish slavery in America by destroying the English market for the slave-grown article. The apostles of this movement made the land ring with eloquent denunciation and appeal. They brought a flood of light to bear on the wretched condition of the Hindu laborer. Their speeches assailed the pretence that the Government was owner of the soil of India, "with the right to take what suited it from every man's field." They proved that its extortion of rent made private property in land impossible, and that cultivation had decreased in consequence in the ratio of two-thirds, while the tax assessed continued nearly the same. They denounced it for laying high taxes on the cultivation of waste lands, for the express purpose of preventing the impoverished ryots from resorting to these. They pointed to a long series of appalling

[1] Gen. Briggs's *Speech at Glasgow*, Aug. 1, 1839.
[2] Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*.

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famines; in one of which five hundred thousand persons perished in a single year, while grain enough was being exported from Bengal to feed the whole number with a pound of rice a day; and another of which swept off three millions in Bengal alone. They described the ruin of Hindu manufacturing industry, and the fall of British imports down to sixpence a head on the population. They warned the rulers of the detestation in which they were held throughout India, of the elements of desperate revolt that were gathering. The horrors of Hindu slavery were spread out before the eyes of the British people, who were just then striking off the chains from their West India bondsmen.[1] Yet twenty years of corporative despotism were yet to elapse, finding their natural result in the terrible scenes of 1857–58, before the worst features of the old land system in India began to yield to the civilization of the age.[2]

Police.

The police of the East India Company was as mischievous as its revenue system. It was described as "not only powerless to repress crime, but a great engine of oppression and corruption." The venality and arbitrariness of the courts became intolerable, and were among the leading causes of the rebellion.[3]

Opium trade.

The monopoly of opium and its compulsory culture were sources of enormous evil. At one time a fifth of the revenues of the Company were

[1] Of pre-eminent value were the labors of George Thompson, both in advocating the abolition of slavery and in defending oppressed and defrauded native rulers, with a thoroughness and eloquence which entitle him to be called the apostle of East Indian emancipation, as he was one of the bravest helpers of the American slave.

[2] See the speeches of Thompson, O'Connell, and Briggs, before the British India Societies during 1839 and 1840, for abundant and startling statistics on these points.

[3] Ludlow, ch. xix.; Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

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derived from this pernicious interest. The loss of productive industry effected was as nothing compared with the moral ruin it entailed.[1] It was the decisive testimony of Hastings that the Hindus were a remarkably temperate people before evil communication with the Europeans had corrupted them.[2] The use of intoxicating drugs is prohibited to the Brahmans by the native law, and is still disreputable among the higher classes. In the rural districts intemperance is still rare; but wherever English rule is established, and foreign influence active, it has greatly increased. It is admitted on all hands that in these localities the character of the people has changed, and that both Mohammedans and Hindus are rapidly degenerating, under the effects of alcohol and opium.[3]

The Mohammedan government is nowise responsible for the terrible results of the opium trade. It repressed the cultivation of the poppy as long as it was able. Ninety years ago no regular trade in opium existed. The East India Company's officers began it by smuggling a thousand chests into China. Thenceforward the "fostering care" of the Company developed it till it "enticed all India, native and foreign, Christian and Buddhist." In 1840 the Chinese government destroyed twenty thousand chests of opium, being not more than half the importation for a single year. In 1858 the production in India, of which England held the monopoly, for exportation into China, amounted to seventy thousand chests.

[1] *Westm. Rev.*, July, 1859. "Half the crime in the opium districts," said Mr. Sym (Ludlow, II. 300), "is due to opium. One cultivator will demoralize a whole village." Dr. Allen (*India*, p. 304) declares that he knew nothing in modern commerce, except the slave-trade, more reprehensible than the manner in which this business was carried on.

[2] Ludlow, II. 302.

[3] Allen, pp. 478, 479, 497. See testimonies collected in Thompson's *Address at Friends' Yearly Meeting in London*, 1839.

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Government, down to the rebellion of 1857, not only never made the slightest effort to repress, but steadily encouraged it, urging the legalization of it upon the Chinese rulers, who as strenuously strove to resist a scourge that was desolating their dominions. England, in fact, "found India and China comparatively free from intemperance through the positive restraints of Buddhism and Mohammedanism. She has established in these countries the most extensive and deeply rooted debauchery the world has known."[1]

"The intemperance of the British soldiery in India," wrote Dr. Jeffreys in 1858, "appears to be bounded only by the opportunities they can command. It is to a lamentable extent associated with Christianity in the minds of the natives. Once, on my making inquiries into the creeds of certain black descendants of Europeans in the Upper Provinces, a well-informed Mussulman informed me they were Christians, that he knew it (speaking not disrespectfully, but in all simplicity) from their being nearly all of them drunkards. The example of Christians, and the efforts of government to multiply spirit-shops for the sake of revenue, are changing the habits of the natives. Drunkenness is becoming prevalent, whereas formerly there were few who touched alcohol in any form."[2]

Salt monopoly.

The salt monopoly afforded another fifth of the revenue of the Company. The peasants were forbidden the very salt-mud of the river mouths, their main reliance for agricultural purposes. "Not a grain of the sun-evaporated salt left by nature at his own door could be placed by a native on his tongue, or

[1] These last facts and affirmations are taken from a work by Dr. Jeffreys on *The British Army in India* (London, 1858). See, also, Ludlow, II. 302.

[2] Jeffreys, p. 19.

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removed into his hut;" and the trade in salted fish was destroyed. At one time the price of this necessary article was raised to thirteen hundred per cent above the cost of production.[1]

Ruin of manufactures.

The supersedure of native manufactures by English machinery created an amount of suffering among numerous classes in India scarcely to be paralleled in the history of labor.[2] The slave-grown cotton of America, manufactured in England, was forced on a people who once had woven for their own use the finest fabrics in the world. The native looms that not long before produced annually eight millions of pieces of cotton goods were stopped altogether. Once flourishing cities and villages, the seats of a busy and thriving population, were ruined. Dacca, for instance, once a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants, has been reduced to sixty thousand; and its transparent muslin, a "woven wind," a whole dress of which will pass through a finger-ring, is "almost a thing of the past."[3]

Internal communication.

The older governments were careful to build roads and secure communication across the country. In 1857, the "Friend of India" confessed that "for one good road we have made we have suffered twenty to disappear."[4] Four or five thousand miles of railroad have since been projected and in great part constructed, as well as several thousand miles of canal; but the native industry can hardly have begun to recover from the terrible discouragement created by the long-continued neglect of internal communication, on the part of the invaders, and the

[1] Ludlow, Thompson, &c.
[2] Allen, 449.
[3] Ludlow, I. 10.
[4] See, also, Allen, p. 327.

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incessant shocks of conquest and civil strife which they helped to introduce.

Agriculture. The Skanda Purâna describes the descent of Gangâ, the sacred stream, through the tresses of Vishnu, which broke her fall and scattered her waves, bearing fertility to the land. She followed the steps of Bhagiratha, to whom she was granted, — a drop of the waters of heaven, as reward of his all-conquering devotion. Such the consecration in mythic lore of the popular enthusiasm and love for fertilizing streams. Nothing in the Râmâyana is more eloquent with genuine national feeling than the episode in which the descent of the waters is identified with the beneficence of all the gods. It represents them as sent to revive the ashes of the seventy thousand sons of Sagara, reduced to dust by Vishnu, "spouse of the all-nourishing earth, in his avatâra of Fire," because they reproached him with carrying away the sacred horse of their father's sacrifice, which they had sought in vain through the worlds. These are the symbols of an agricultural people; and the whole is manifestly like the Greek myth of Ceres and Proserpine, significant of the death and re-birth of vegetation.

Serpents, in the popular mythology of India, seem to represent this oldest interest of the community. The festivals in honor of these first owners and occupants of the ground are celebrated by young and old, rich and poor, throughout Western India. The children have holiday, and the serpent figures are crowned with flowers. In the Sutras, Purânas, and Epics, these animals are always mentioned with respect, and incarnations in serpent form abound. The popular faith ascribes this veneration to gratitude for the

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forgiveness shown by the queen of serpents to the husbandman who killed her little ones by the stroke of his plough.

The prodigious monuments of this agricultural ardor, so intimately related to the old Hindu religious faith, have been treated by later invaders very much as similar achievements by the ancient Peruvians were treated by the Spanish conquerors of South America. Of the innumerable canals, reservoirs and tanks for irrigation, built by native and Mussulman governments, great numbers were suffered to decay, and the contributions paid in by the people for their repair, in accordance with ancient custom, were appropriated to other purposes.[1] Wherever the opportunity has been afforded, as especially in the Panjâb of late years, the natives have entered with vigor on the improvement of these long-neglected works, and their extension upon a suitable scale.

Inferences.

To such demoralizing forces the Hindus have been subject for centuries. When we read therefore of the filthy condition of villages, the destitute and despondent state of the agricultural population, we shall not need to resort for explanation either to caste or to religion. We shall appreciate McCulloch's abundant proofs that this poverty and misery are largely owing to that misgovernment of which we have here given but the merest outline.[2] We shall appreciate the force of such testimony as that of the "Bombay Times," in 1849, that the boundaries of the dominions of the East India Company could be discovered by the superior condition of the country people who had not become subject to their sway;

[1] Ludlow, II. 317; Arnold's *Dalhousie*, II. 282.
[2] *Commerc. Dict.*, article on East Indies.

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or as Campbell's, who affirms, in his work on India, that "the longer we possess a province, the more common and grave does perjury become;" or as Sir Thomas Munro's, half a century since, that the inhabitants of the British Provinces were "the most abject race in all India." We shall appreciate the energy with which Burke declared in the House of Commons that, "if the English had been driven from India, they would have left no better traces of their dominion than hyenas and tigers."

Ill-treatment.

Systematic contempt and outrage by British officials was so much a matter of course, that for an Englishman to treat natives with common civility was looked upon as a prodigy; and the government servants had a general impression that it would bring one into bad odor with the Company.[1] Impressment, plundering of houses, and burning of villages, the kick, the buffet, the curse, mal-treatment in every form, such as made men like Metcalfe, Napier, and Shore "wonder that we hold India for a year," brought the ryots to the conviction at last, as the missionaries confessed in their conference of 1855, that "the Christian religion consisted in having no caste, eating beef, drinking freely, and trampling on the rights of niggers."[2] The gross immoralities of Europeans in the early period of British rule in India in fact led to the use of the term Christian as a by-word, having nearly the sense of "bastard;" and, "had the name been altogether laid aside, it would have been a great blessing for those parts of India most frequented by Europeans."[3] It can therefore hardly

[1] Hon F. J. Shore. See, also, *Speeches at Friends' Meeting in London*, 1839

[2] Ludlow, II. 365.

[3] Buyers's *Northern India*, p. 107; Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 423; *Westm. Rev.* for July, 1868.

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be held suggestive of special hardness in the natural heathen heart, when we find, after more than a century of British sway, that there are less than a hundred thousand Christian converts in India out of a population of nearly two hundred millions; and less than twenty thousand out of the forty-five millions of Bengal.

Slavery.

It remains to add one more item to this sad detail of Christian influence in India. Not only did the Company gratuitously sanction existent Hindu and Mohammedan slavery by interpreting law in its interest, needlessly placing it under the shield of "respect for the religious institutions of the natives;" not only did it everywhere permit and justify the sale of this kind of property among them; not only encourage an external slave-trade, for a long period carried on for the supply of India by Arab traders with the coast of Africa and the Red Sea; not only sell slaves itself, to secure arrears of revenue. It steadily resisted numerous endeavors to obtain the abolition of Hindu slavery on the part of such men as Harrington and Baber, from 1798 to 1833.[1] Not till 1811, was legislation directed against the slave-trade; and the law then made prohibited the sale of such persons only as should be brought from abroad *for this express purpose*, — a limitation which rendered it of no effect. Every extension of British territory increased the traffic, opening the whole domain to importation of fresh victims.[2] In 1833, a bill introduced by Earl Grey, for abolishing slavery in five years, was so emasculated in its passage through Parliament by the opposition of the Duke of Welling-

[1] See the case fully stated in Adam's *Slavery in India*.

[2] Judge Leycester, in *Parliamentary Documents for* 1829, No. 138, p. 315.

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ton and others, as to come out finally but a timid recommendation to the Company to mitigate the evil as far as should be found convenient; serving only to encourage and confirm it. The earnest agitation of the subject by the British India Society in 1838 aroused fresh interest; but the East Indies and Ceylon were excepted from the great Colonial Emancipation of that year. Nor can I learn that any complete Act of Abolition has been passed, down to the present hour. What we are here especially to observe is the fact that this continuance of so barbarous a system has not had the excuse of a necessary regard for the prejudices and interests of the people. Judge Vibart, after an investigation made by desire of government in 1825, reported that the respectable classes of the Hindus were strongly in favor of abolition, and that the Mohammedans had no very great objection. Macaulay, as Secretary of the Board, was assured by the ablest of the Company's civil servants that there would be no danger in the attempt. In 1833, four thousand Hindus, Parsees, and Mohammedans memorialized Parliament, thanking it for its exertions to abolish the slave-trade.[1] It was the opinion of able lawyers that the Mohammedan law itself, if rightly executed, would free almost all the slaves in India; nor has that of the Hindus any immediate connection with their religion or their system of caste.

Traits of Hindu character.

But we hasten from this criticism to an estimate which could not be fairly presented without such reference to an oft-told history, otherwise needing no fresh recital. Charges of gross depravity are constantly brought against the Hindus

[1] Pamphlet on *Slavery in India*, compiled largely from official documents; printed by Ward & Co., London, 1841.

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as a people. Such writers as Mill and Ward seem to be incapable of finding any good in them. Of these sweeping accusations, falsehood, vindictiveness, and sensuality have been the most frequent. The best authorities agree in refuting them.[1] Dr. Jeffreys allows himself the extravagant statements that "every child is educated carefully to avoid speaking the truth, except as a matter of interest or necessity," and "that they will compass each other's ruin or death for the smallest object." Colonel Sleeman, on the contrary, tells us he has had hundreds of cases before him in which a man's property, liberty, or life depended on his telling a lie; and he has refused to tell it, to save either. Mr. Elphinstone, whose opportunities were those of thirty years in the highest positions in Indian service, describes the Râjputs as remarkable "for courage and self-devotion, combined with gentleness of manners and softness of heart, a boyish playfulness and an almost infantine simplicity." "No set of people among the Hindus," he continues, "are so depraved as the dregs of our own great towns. The villagers are everywhere amiable, affectionate to their families, kind to their neighbors, and towards all but the government honest and sincere. The townspeople are different, but quiet and orderly. Including the Thugs and Decoits, the mass of crime is less in India than in England. The Thugs are almost a separate nation, and the Decoits are desperate ruffians in gangs. The Hindus are a mild and gentle people, more merciful to prisoners than any other Asiatics. Their freedom from gross debauchery is the point in which they appear to most advantage; and their superiority in

[1] See especially Montgomery Martin's admirable *Report on the Condition of India* (1838).

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purity of manners is not flattering to our self-esteem."[1] "Domestic slaves are treated exactly like servants, except that they are regarded as belonging to the family. I doubt if they are ever sold."[2] It is highly creditable to the Hindus that Śiva-worship through the symbol of reproduction, the lingâm, once widely spread in India, is now found to have "no hold on the popular feeling, and to suggest no offensive ideas." "It is but justice to state," says Wilson, "that it is unattended in Northern India by any indecent or indelicate ceremonies; and it requires a lively imagination to trace any resemblance in its symbols to the objects they are supposed to represent. The general absence of indecency from public worship and religious establishments in the Gangetic provinces was fully established by the late General Stuart, and in every thing relating to actual practice better authority cannot be desired."[3] The licentious customs attributed to the sakti-worshippers the same authorities state to be seldom practised, and then in secrecy; and to be held illicit even by their supporters, if instituted mèrely for sensual gratification.[4] Statistics show that the profligacy of the large cities of British India hardly exceeds that of European communities of similar extent. And to the amount actually existing the habits of Europeans have largely contributed; while the efforts of the government to diminish this form of immorality have done much to counterbalance these bad influences, as well as to suppress the older religious ceremonies which involved it.[5]

[1] *History of British India*, pp. 375-381. See Ritchie, *British World in the East*, I. 186.
[2] Elphinstone, I. 350.
[3] Wilson, *Essays on Religion of Hindus*, II. 64; I. 219.
[4] Ibid., I. 261.
[5] Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 423.

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Morality.

The great diversity of opinion as to the practical morals of the Hindus is doubtless due in part to the great varieties of moral type that must exist in so immense and complex a population as that of India, subjected to such variety of foreign influence for thousands of years. It does not appear, however, that the Hindus have been more inclined to sensuality than other races. This is true of them even as sharing the almost universal cultus of the productive principle in nature, whose symbols seem to have represented the sacred duty of man to propagate his kind. They have always had sufficient sense of propriety to carve the statues of their gods in a way not to give offence to modesty.[1] Yet their vices must on the whole have been such as belong to the impressible temperament of tropical races, the passive yielding fibre that obeys the luxury of illusion and reverie. The truth must be somewhere between the unbounded praises lavished by Greek writers on the ancient Hindus and the excessive censure of their descendants by Christian criticism.

It is in no unmindfulness of these probabilities in the case that I add a few more good words for this non-Christian people from competent witnesses. Malcom "could not think of the Bengal sepoys in his day without admiration." Hastings said of the Hindus in general that they were "gentle and benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown them and less prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted than any people on the face of the earth; faithful, affectionate, submissive to legal authority." Heber, whose detestation of the religions of India was intense, yet records similar impressions. "The Hindus are brave, cour-

[1] Stevenson, in *Jour. Roy. As. Soc.*, 1842, p. 5

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teous, intelligent, most eager for knowledge and improvement; sober, industrious, dutiful to parents, affectionate to their children, uniformly gentle and patient, and more easily affected by kindness and attention to their wants and feelings than any people I ever met with."[1] Doubtless these statements, like those on the other side, are highly colored; but they have great value in view of the character and opportunities of their authors. "The Hindus," says Harrison,[2] "are a mild, peaceable people, fulfil the relations of life with tolerable exactness, naturally kind to each other, and always ready to be hospitable, even where poverty might exempt them: they are never deficient in filial affection. It is a common thing to find people in humble walks of life bestowing a third or even half their scanty income on aged and destitute parents." I will only add the somewhat ardent tribute of the Mohammedan Abul Faz'l, vizier of the great Sultan Akbar in the seventeenth century, a thoroughly competent witness. "The Hindus," he says, in his *Ayin Akbari*, "are religious, affable, cheerful, lovers of justice, given to retirement, able in business, admirers of truth, grateful, and of unbounded fidelity. And their soldiers know not what it is to fly from the field of battle."

What inhumanity must have been needed to rouse such a race to the barbarities of Delhi and Cawnpore!

Cruelties of the war.

It must be remembered that these barbarities were not the work of the people as a whole, and that they were quite paralleled by cruelties on the part of the Christian invaders both before and afterwards. The horrors of Cawnpore were the work

[1] Heber's *Journal*, II. 369, 409.

[2] *English Colonies*, p. 64, 66.

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of Nana Sahib and his body guard of savage adherents, his own soldiers "refusing to massacre the women and children, which was accomplished by the vilest of the city," while his own officers sought in vain to dissuade him from his monstrous purpose.[1] Dr. McLeod invokes his countrymen to public confession, with shame and sorrow, "of indiscriminate slaughter perpetrated in cool blood by Christian gentlemen, in a spirit which sunk them below the level of their enemies."[1] The atrocities of this war, on the part of the Hindus, were in fact the natural excesses of an excitable people, driven to madness, not merely by such crimes as the causeless massacre of the loyal thirty-seventh Sepoy regiment, at Benarès, such treacheries as the broken promise of higher pay to the army of Oude, such outrages on the religious convictions of the native soldiers as the compulsory use of cartridges greased with pork, but by a long-continued series of enormities that had become habitual. As illustrative of these, the fact will suffice that, a year or two before the revolt of 1857, investigations by the government brought to light a regular system of torture of the most revolting description even upon women, which for years had been applied in many parts of India by native officers of the Company, in the collection of its revenues and for extorting evidence. This insurrection was but the last of a series growing out of similar causes, and upon the greatest scale of all. It was the common cause of dispossessed kings and beggared chieftains starting up and springing to arms all over India; the issue of a policy of annexation and "subsidiary alliances," pushed for half a century by bribery, fraud, and force; of the industries of millions

[1] McLeod, *Days in Northern India*, p. 68.

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drained, and the hoarded wealth of ages swept off, to fill the coffers of rapacious foreign masters; of systematic outrage and contempt as of the lower animals, practised upon a race whose literature is magnificent, and whose civilization runs beyond historic record; of a system of exclusion, which shut out the native of India from office and opportunity, whether civil or military: the issue, in short, of monstrous misgovernment, which the noblest men had labored ineffectually to reform, and which had made the coming of just such an earthquake as this, for every thoughtful mind in India, merely a question of a few years more or less of time. It could not be said that the East India Company had attempted to suppress the religion of the Hindus: it would give little countenance to missionary efforts, and it even derived revenues from the superstitious rites of the most ignorant classes; yet it had not succeeded in the slightest degree in calming the nervous fears of the Sepoy army, which knew its character by closest contact, that the native beliefs and traditions would be recklessly trampled out by its mere military and secular interests.

Justice to both sides.

It is by no means my purpose to throw the responsibility of the terrible scenes of 1857–58 upon the East India Company alone. I have no desire to hide either the difficulties of the position with which they had to deal, or the previous semi-barbarized condition of the Hindu States, upon which in many respects certainly their rule was an improvement. The brutality, corruption, and weakness of the later Mogul princes of India, had disorganized these communities; and robber tribes and robber chieftains were spreading desolation through portions of the peninsula when the French and English began their

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struggle for its possession. Still more important is it to recognize the improvement in Indian affairs after their administration — withdrawn from the East India Company in consequence of the revolt — was assumed by the British people. New civil and criminal codes have been introduced, more wisely regardful of the interests of the native tribes; municipal and other offices have been transferred in some degree to native talent; and the extortion of rents has been measurably guarded against. The results of these changes, it is claimed, are already apparent in improved cultivation, purer administration, and happier social life; though such terrible facts as the Orissa famine in 1865, with its record of governmental neglect, become all the more discreditable in view of such claims. While we render all due credit to those who have labored to bring about these measures, and are laboring for still more important ones, equally consistent with the spirit of the age; and while the noble record of individual officers and scholars, like Bentinck, Elphinstone, Briggs, Crawford, Jones, Lawrence, through the long history of British India, should receive the lasting gratitude of science and humanity,[1] — we would not fail to note also the bearing of the happy results so speedily claimed for a juster policy, on the question of Hindu capacity and character. That Mogul oppression should have brought about the degenerate social condition of the natives at the commencement of British rule, is nowise to their discredit. That such amelioration as is now described should follow at once in the track of the earliest

[1] The reader will find this record, which I would gladly pause here to review, in the pages of Kaye's *Lives of Indian Statesmen*, Arnold's *Dalhousie*, and other like works, familiar to the public in England and America.

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fair opportunity afforded them, after more than a century of this rule, is surely a strong argument in their favor.

Nemesis.

And, after all, the conclusion we draw from this painful history must differ widely from that of writers whose view springs from their natural sympathy with the victory of a higher civilization over a lower, *and from that only*. This crowning insurrection, in the view of history, reflects more credit on the conquered than on the conquerors. If Macaulay's logic be admitted as fair, when, in his brilliant essay on the life of Clive, he affirmed that "the event of our history in India is a proof that sincerity and uprightness are wisdom, that all we could have gained by imitating the duplicity around us is as nothing when compared with what we have gained by being the only power in India on whose word reliance can be placed," — what inference could be drawn when his premise was reversed by unanswerable facts, and the event proved an utter *absence* of confidence in the government of India from end to end of the land? What a piece of irony does the complacent self-eulogy, echoed by so many less respectable voices, become! The *event* of European government in India yields a very different lesson. When the râjâs of Oude marched in procession to give in their adhesion to the British Government, after the conquest of that kingdom, "all," says McLeod, "were thankful for their restored lands, and the hope of British protection. But there was not one who loved us for our own sakes; not one who would not have preferred a native rule to ours, even with tolerable protection of life and property; not one who did not regret the unrighteous destruction

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of the Kingdom of Oude."[1] So, in the war of 1857, almost the whole Bengal army was in sympathy with the rebellion.[2] It was universally recognized at that time that the long-continued rule of England in India had in no degree reconciled the masses of that vast empire to the authority of their masters. "If the Russians should march an army into Scinde," said the "Westminster Review," so late as in 1868, "a spirit of disaffection and desire of change would agitate the whole country." This persistent refusal to accept or to trust selfish and despotic rulers, with whatever uncivilized impulses it may be connected, gives hints of higher loyalties. And humanity finds its real interest in the impressive fact that, after centuries of wars and tyrannies, Persian, Afghan, Mongol, Mohammedan and Christian, there should yet have survived enough of the old Aryan fire to turn on the latest invader in determined and desperate revolt. Such wrath indeed smoulders in the most gentle and laborious races, and in them is most terrible when its frenzy comes at last. In the East and in the West alike, a Nemesis has awaited proud and selfish nations for exploiting races weaker than themselves. The passion of the Hindu and the patience of the American Negro are dissimilar qualities; but the wrongs of both are avenged.

The Hindus do not deserve contempt on any ground. They are made for noble achievement in philosophy, in æsthetics, in science, and even, with Western help, in social and practical activities. Their full day has not yet come. Their vitality is far from spent: they are not in their senescence, but in

Promise.

[1] *Days in Northern India*, p. 88.

[2] Ibid., p. 166.

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their prime. Their chiefs, often ferocious and crafty, are as often heroic and magnanimous. Sivaji, Hyder Ali, Tippoo Saib, Holkar, and others, were brilliant soldiers, and fought valiantly for their cause to the death. India has no lack of subtle thinkers, learned scholars, able administrators, shrewd merchants, nor yet of generous helpers in the improvement of the people. An estimate made by British officials in 1829 represents the works of public utility constructed by individuals, without view to personal profit, in a single district of half a million people, as amounting in value to nearly a million pounds sterling, besides plantations of trees enclosing two-thirds of the villages.[1] Hindustan has native scholars of eminence both in Sanskrit and European letters, whose editorship of Sanskrit works as well as contributions to the philosophical and ethnological journals are at this time especially of great value. Deva Śastri mastered the Eastern and Western systems of Astronomy. Râjendralâl Mitra was entrusted with the task of expounding the ancient coins discovered in 1863, and has brought out important Brahmanical and Buddhist works. The lamented Râdhâkânta Deva Bahadur, the author of an immense Sanskrit encyclopædia, was an honorary member of numerous learned European Societies. Fresh editions of the national epos, and other great works of antiquity, with valuable commentaries, paraphrases, and learned revisions, have within a few years appeared under the auspices of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which owe very much of their excellence as well as their elegance to the personal industry, ability and munificence, of native

[1] See *Westm. Rev.*, July, 1868.

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scholars.[1] There is ample ground for predicting that, as further friction with Western thought shall elicit the special genius of the Hindus, it will be found capable of supplying many desiderata in our Western civilization, contributing in ways as yet unimagined by us to the breadth and fulness both of our religious and social ideals.

Power and defect.

The effect of a sensuous, enervating climate on the Aryan has, however, been in many ways prodigious. His very idealism became a persuasion of the nothingness of the individual. The lack of practical stimulus inclined his intellect to contemplation, and turned his first endeavor at the organization of Labor into what looks to us more like an organization of Idleness: the drone priest at the head, the drudging menial at the foot, the lazy soldier, a blight on industry, between the two. Hindu life, in its twofold aspect, grew more and more like the great rivers it dwelt by, in their alternate flood and failure, overflow and return. In Thought, a great, broad, still, dreamy sea, its bare, motionless face upturned to the sky; in Action, a cooped and stinted stream, however stirred here and there, girt with broad strips of thirsty desert and even treacherous slime. Surely it is refreshing to find, under these dead-weights of physical nature, the earnest endeavor for co-operative work, the love of agriculture, the unconquerable germs of liberty. The degeneracy itself has its hopeful side. It does not prove that the physical must inevitably overmaster the spiritual everywhere,

[1] Many of these are mentioned in a synopsis of the recent publications of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal*, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXV. (1871), p. 656. Their contributions to the *Bibliotheca Indica* have been of especial value. Gildemeister (*Bibl. Sanskr.*, 1847) mentions more than 60 Hindu scholars of our time, besides 100 earlier ones.

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except under specifically Christian disciplines. It illustrates the universal law, that the life that spends itself in thinking or dreaming, and fails to put its brain into its hand, under whatever disciplines or "dispensations," unmans itself, and becomes impotent even to think and dream.

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II.

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

I.

VEDÂNTA.

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VEDÂNTA.

THE theme now before me recalls a profound impression of the naturalness of theism, left on my mind many years since by the wonderful circles of Stonehenge. The circle is the integer of Form. Repeated in the apparent courses of the stars, in the seasons, in vegetation, in alternations of life and death, crowning all natural forces with recurrence and consent, it held sway in the soul of the rude worshipper also; and there on the round plain, where only the sweep of self-re-entering lines meets the eye, whether above or around, he had built his colossal altar in its image, even out of the natural stones, without cement, almost without art. The half-conscious child of Nature had laid his hand on her central truth, — "Greater than the many is the One."

The Circle as symbol.

It is a fact of psychological interest that similar megalithic structures in circular form and of prehistoric origin have been found in Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany, Arabia, and India.[1] The oldest monuments in Southern Asia are probably of this character.[2] The history of religious art shows us a very early and wide-spread use of this natural symbol of wholeness, or all-embracing unity.

[1] *Ethnogénie Gauloise* (Paris, 1868), p. 520; Lubbock's *Prehistoric Man*.

[2] See Meadows Taylor, in *Journal of Bombay Branch of Roy. As. Soc.* (IV. 380). Ferguson (*Rude Stone Monuments*) thinks these cromlechs are of more recent origin.

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Universality of the idea of Unity.

It is nearly two hundred years since Cudworth's learned demonstration that the polytheism of the ancient world was but the cover of a deeper faith in One Supreme God.[1] The argument was confined to certain great philosophical and mythological systems, and marred by a strong dogmatic bias towards deriving the wisdom of the ancients from Hebrew sources. It did not deal with the natural laws of religious belief, which show us a theistic germ unfolding in the earliest stages of social growth. Illustrations of these laws are now, however, quite abundant; and the grounds of this all-pervading aspiration of mankind should be recognized by every thoughtful mind.

Unity is the sublime conclusion of science; but religion does not wait for science. The soul is clearer-sighted than the understanding. It blends poet, philosopher, and saint in the wonder and awe of the child at what he simply sees and feels.

Its grounds in natural intuition.

The most unreflecting savage cannot quite escape the impression that he is the one cause of the multiplicity of acts which make up his life. He at least unconsciously follows this thread of inward unity in dealing with the varied phenomena of outward nature. Just as he shapes an ideal in the image of every passion and propensity within him, so he is always more or less haunted by the intimation of some highest all-containing presence, in the image of that *personal identity* which all these passions and propensities represent. In all his worship of elementary forces, there is the play of this guiding instinct,

[1] *Intellectual System* (Harrison's ed., London, 1845). See, especially, I. 435; II. 226, 246, 300.

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this law of his inner being. As mental growth advances, higher forms of the intuition are attained.

Its diverse forms.

Either the gods are referred back to a first God, to somewhat in the dim Unknown whence they all emerge, or to a constant central force of living deity, — and in these ways have been shaped certain Greek and Semitic theogonies, — or else, if that point is not yet reached, all the gods are made implicitly one; as we have seen in the Vedic hymns, where worship is always *essentially the same*, an effort for supreme devotion to each and every name in turn. Self-consciousness may be ever so rudimentary, it suffices for this implicit unity in the movements of the religious instinct. All worship, even in the lowest tribes, has at least this in common, — that it is an upward look: the names of primitive deities are found to be curiously associated with terms that mean *overhead*, *above*, or with root-sounds that signify *upward motion*. The subjective attitude of these simple minds in worship is always a more or less similar resultant of blended hopes and fears. And, on the other hand, the *objects* of these emotions are always more or less consciously referred to the all-surrounding and enfolding Whole; which contains in its mysterious depths all their minor capabilities of help and harm, and which the orbed eye finds constantly present, whether it looks upward into the infinite spaces, or traces the paths of all-pervading light, or searches the horizon line.

The rude cromlech speaks to the universal religious sentiment. The belief in an all-embracing and all-controlling One, however diverse in form, is not special to tribe or religion. It is human. In the

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sense I have noted, it is no exaggeration to say with Maximus Tyrius, "All mankind are agreed that there is one God and Father, and that the many gods are his children."[1] Even from the rude races of America and Africa, the latest researches already referred to bring ample testimony to this tendency of belief, in names of supreme meaning, more or less perfectly *expressive* of unity, even if not clearly conceived as involving it.[2] What, to a more advanced stage of reflection, are deities but *forms of deity?* The gods are but "co-rulers with God," this one name expressing the *essence of sway*, on which the special force of each depends. Neither in Plato nor Maximus Tyrius, neither in Hebrew Psalmists nor Christian Fathers, does the term *gods*, so often used, imply the denial of One as Supreme. On the contrary, the sovereign unity receives thereby a greater fulness of life and relation. "His manifold powers, diffused through his works," says Maximus, "we heathen invoke by different names. Of the gods, there are many names, but one nature." "Let us worship Him," says Proclus, "as unfolding the whole race of deities, as the God of all gods, the unity of all unities, as holy among the holy ones, and concealed in the intelligible gods." "Owing to the greatness of the Deity," says the Hindu Nirukta, "the One Soul is lauded in many ways. The different gods are members of the One Soul."[3]

[1] *Dissert.* XVII. 5. See, especially, Lamennais, *Essai sur l'Indifférence en Matière de Religion*, ch. xxvi. De Belloguet, in a learned word on Druidism (*Ethnogénie Gauloise*, has carefully traced this belief through the various branches of the Aryan family, especially the Celtic. On the theistic elements in the religion of the Babylonians, Chaldæans, and Phœnicians, see Fürst, *Gesch. d. Bibl. Lit.*, I. 45–49.

[2] Brinton's *Myths of New World*, ch. ii.; Livingstone's *Africa;* Baring Gould's *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, I. 274.

[3] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 134.

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These poles of unity and variety coexist in strictly *theistic* religions also. We call the Hebrews monotheists; but Jehovah was "God above all gods," and Elohim was a plural noun. If a Hindu synthesis reconciles Brahmâ, Vishnu, Siva, in a form of theism, so Christianity has its triperson-ality of God. Even its liberal sects are, in substance, adorers both of a Christ and a God. The Gnostics were believers in a Divine Unity, yet with hypostases and æons they made God thirty-fold. The ruder Romanist adores saints and pictures, holy coats and handkerchiefs. He would probably find it difficult to separate these, in his sense of personal reliance, from deity itself, which he nevertheless knows to be one and only one. Practically, the idols of the Christian world are numberless. They are not personified, like their analogues in the ancient world; so that we do not apply to this form of worship the term *polytheism*. And yet it would probably be hard to prove that the sense of Supreme Unity was intercepted by swarming divinities in the average Greek mind more effectu-ally than it is by these materialistic and traditional idolatries, the fetichism of modern society and trade. The idea of the Infinite and Etérnal, in its distinc-tion as spiritual reality from the vague cravings of unlimited special desires, has to be continually renewed by thinker and prophet, as of old.

Polarity of Theistic faith.

As this idea of infinite Mind, one in itself, and containing all things, has never been lost by man, so it has not anywhere been wholly absent. It is organic and vital; and its flame has at times burned low only to startle some Moses, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, into making fresh appeal to the simple sense of reality, and recalling man to him-

Intuition of the One in-destructible.

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self. The Greek Mysteries, brought, it is probable, from the East by the Dorians, were specially effective for two thousand years, in this direction as well as in maintaining faith in moral sanctions and spiritual destinies beyond death; and almost all the great men of ancient times seem to have been initiated into them.[1] To the philosophers indeed the "large utterance" of those ancient gods spoke of a transcendent One; while the popular faith beheld all its deities gathered at the common hearth of Hestia, at the world's centre, and around the Father Jove. Even the monstrous figures of popular Eastern mythology were vestiges of this inevitable instinct. Brahmâ with his foot in his mouth, and Vishnu on his coiled serpent, or with his necklace of worlds, are but mythic sport with the ideal Circle, that sacred line which returns into itself; the natural symbol of the One. The three-headed, hundred-armed, thousand-eyed divinities of the Greeks and the Hindus did but multiply numbers, in order to embrace the more in unity. It was the play of a Pythagorean instinct in the rude imagination of childish races.

The Hindu Pleroma.

To find this sense of a Supreme Unity or wholeness on which all religion rests, in its most absolute form, we must appreciate the philosophical capacity of the Aryan Hindu. Here was the very field for his vast generalizations upon a few observed data, for his measureless abstraction, his passion for

1 "Go on in the right path; and contemplate the one ruler of the world.
He is one, and self-proceeding. From Him only are all things born;
He works in all, unseen by mortal eyes, yet seeing all."

(*Orphic Hymn of the Mysteries*, quoted by Clem. Alex., *Exhort. to the Heathen*, VII.)

"When you pray, go with a prepared purity of mind, such as is required of you when you approach the rites and mysteries" (Epictetus, III. 21). "The Eleusinian mysteries are called *Initia*, both because they are indeed the beginnings of a life of true principles, and as teaching us to realize a better hope in death" (Cic., *De Legibus*, II. 14). "Of them stands human nature most in need" (Isocrates, *Panegyr.*).

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pure thought in its ultimates. All forms of the conception of unity, from the simplest to the most subtle, were involved in the nebulous fulness of his idea. It was indeed a *Pleroma* (to use Neo-Platonic terms of speech), from which the various theological systems of the world may be drawn forth, as *æons*, at least by *speculative* construction; though of course but as ideal foretypes of what was to be unfolded in the solidity of science and practical use, by other times and more energetic races. In the Hindu mind, it stood simply as the free play of pure idea; the unity of all essence and all existence; the sweep of an Infinite Circle; deity as inclusion and evolution of all forms. This is the central sun of Hindu philosophy; the key to its religious mysteries, and its philosophical reactions. "Who so worships this or that special and separate being," says the Brihad Upanishad, "worships determination, not totality, — worship thou Soul, in which all the differences become one."[1]

Development of ideal unity in Hindu thought.

It is interesting to note how this aspiration haunted and swayed the Hindu mind, from infancy to the most abstract introversion of its later systems. Students like Pictet and Müller believe that they find signs of "an original monotheism," positive or implicit, in the primitive faith of the pre-Vedic times.[2] *Cosmic theism* would, as it seems to me, be a better expression for what was not, in any sense, opposed to polytheism, nor yet in any sense a distinct primitive revelation, from which men afterwards fell away. A step further down, in the earlier Hymns of the Veda, we find *Varuna*, rounding the universe with order, maker of the sun's paths and

[1] *Brihad*, I. iv.

[2] Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, pp. 528, 559; Pictet, *Les Aryas Primitifs*, II. 704-714.

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preserver of all sacred limits, alike in the worlds of sense and soul; absorbing into one the primitive instinctive notions of moral sequence and spiritual authority, of justice, providence, and fate.[1] It is believed by some that this name Varuna, identical with Ouranos of the Greeks, whom Hesiod makes the father of the gods, was itself the oldest in Aryan mythology.[2] It must, however, have required a long time to mature so distinct and positive a conception of Moral Order as is contained in the Vedic Hymns to Varuna. If in a *more primitive* meaning his name was really the oldest, it must have given way to that of *Indra*, as the next name of the Supreme in this development of religious sentiment, or sense of wholeness. Like Varuna, Indra concentrated all powers: not at the far off limits of thought, but in the sense of a closer presence, felt in the ethereal expanse, into which the stars fade and the moon wanes and the clouds melt, and shifting light and shadow resolve their mystic play. The vast abyss of creative light absorbed all phenomena, and deity shone in the symbol of Fire, through man and beast, through star and sod. Then, as introversion grew, came more definite concentration of the religious idea around light as a nearer image of the conscious soul, at once self-centred and radiating through all; whereof *the Sun* was the natural symbol, and so became under many names the next emphasis, or phase, of unity for the spiritual process we are tracing. Then all the verses of the Veda are concentrated in *the Gâyatri:* "we meditate on the adorable light of the divine Savitri." All its deities are resolved into gods of the earth, the air, the

[1] See Roth, in *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morg. Gesellsch.*, vol. vi. p. 77.
[2] Koeppen, *Religion des Buddha*, I. p. 3

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sky, "whose names differ according to their works; but there is only one godhead, the Sun, life of all beings, of motion and of rest."[1] All these are further gathered into one "lord of creatures" (Prajâpati) or "deity of them all;"[2] and, again, their whole meaning is absorbed into the sacred monosyllable *AUM*, and even drawn into inward concentration in the triple suppression of the breath, with mind fixed on the Supreme."[3] Or all symbolism is dropped, as the depths of consciousness are explored; and that questioning about the how, the whence, and the whither of life, which had been stirring thoughtful minds through all these ages, is solved in "*One Eternal Soul*," invested with every appellative of Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness. Brahmâ, Adhyâtma, Purusha, had one meaning. "Spirit alone is this All." "Him know ye as the One Soul alone: dismiss all other words."[4]

Such the aspiration to Unity in pantheistic instincts, which nothing but absorption therein could satisfy.

Let us recognize the nature of this change from the world of action to the world of contemplation. Probably it was not to any great extent shared by the mass of the Aryan community, whose epic traditions indicate intense susceptibility to sensuous

Nature of the process.

[1] Old Vedic commentary: see Lassen, I. 768. [2] Colebrooke, Essays, I.

[3] Manu, II. 83. The mystic syllable OM (*aum*) is the constant sign of that worship of unity, which pervades Hindu thought. Burnouf (*Sansk. Dict.*) refers it to *avam*, as from the Zendic *ava* (*this one*), marking existence, — "*He that is to be.*" But, more probably, it was a combination of the initials of the three main elements of Vedic deity, — Agni, Varuna, and the Maruts. The *Mândukya Upanishad* refers the three letters to Brahma, as waking, dreaming, and sleeping; in other words, as manifested outwardly, as manifested to himself, and as *un*manifested, in the unity of his essence; while the whole word, abolishing the distinctions of the letters, represents his absolute nature. The formula of the Bhagavadgitâ is *Om tat sat*, or "God is *that* [i.e., the universal] reality." Later still, the same syllable unites Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Siva in a trinity. It expresses the Buddhist oneness of "Saint, Law, and Congregation." It is the prelude to all Buddhist formulas of prayer. To the Brahmanic *Om tat sat* corresponds the Thibetan *Om mani padme hôm*. In sum, this sacred word, adored throughout eastern Asia, fully represents the continuity of Hindu religious sentiment, and its devotion to ideal unity, through all phases, epochs, and results.

[4] *Mundaka Upanishad*, II. i. 10; ii. 5.

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enjoyment and a stormy physical energy. The simple vigorous impulses of Vedic life were developed into physical passions which it required all the finer moral and spiritual elements of the race to check, and which indeed very gradually yielded, even to the enervating influences of climate and social organization. Yet it is reasonable to believe that a tendency to mystical contemplation, so spontaneous and profound as is shown in all the religious compositions of the post-Vedic age, implies a deep root in national character, and must have been in affinity with the instinctive religious temperament of the people. We have already noted its germs in the hymns. In these there is already a ground of diverse tendency; many of them being of a thoughtful and peaceful, others of a warlike and even revengeful, nature.

The change in the religious sentiment which we are now considering certainly involved a loss of that energetic, healthful sense of the real world and the present life, which belonged to the Vedic age. It was, however, effected by intenser concentration on the inward life of ideas and principles. And the compensations thus secured make the process an important one in the history of religion.

Spirituality involved in the worship of Unity.

The spirituality of the result need not surprise us. This religion was primarily the worship of Unity. A thirst to find the One in the manifold is intellectual inspiration. We must remember how mysterious a step in itself is the genesis of the idea of unity or wholeness. It is a step of the personality, beyond observation of facts, beyond experience; an intuitive affirmation, for which no data of the senses account. And the direction of the mind towards it is the passage from the senses to the spirit.

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We have seen how manifest it is in the Vedic hymns. The gods are universal, their functions interchangeable. Each absorbs the rest, and might readily stand for the whole. "Agni is light; light is Indra; the Sun is light."[1] "Aditi is heaven; is the firmament; is father, mother, son; is all the gods; is the five orders of men; is generation and birth."[2] As Indra "contains all things in himself, as the felloe of a wheel the spokes,".[3] so these oldest hymns hold the later pantheism itself in germ. Sacrifice itself is here but the circulation of one divine life through the round of god, nature, man. It is said of the sacrificial plant that it contains all the worlds and is father of the gods.[4] So the sacrificial horse assumes the names of the gods.[5] And the secret sense of oneness in all life is uttered in other hymns that pour forth thoughtful yearnings to solve the mystery which enfolds all things within and without in its shadow, the mystery of being itself. For these yearnings the universe is a mystic whole. And not less profound and universal the answer: —

"In the beginning the One breathed by itself, yet without breath. Other than It there nothing since has been."[6]

But the Rig Veda holds to Theism also. Aspiration for the One is in fact the worship of Thought itself, and could leave out of sight no function of Mind. Thus the gods are all creators. There are, as we have seen, hymns in which deity appears in all

Worship of thought.

[1] *Rig Veda*. So, in the later Greek inscriptions, we read of Zeus Bacchus, Zeus Æsculapius, &c. Similar compounds are formed with the Egyptian *Ra*, as Ammon Ra, Osiris Ra, &c.

[2] Ibid., I. 89,. 10; I. 164.

[3] Ibid., I. 32, 15.

[4] Ibid., IX. 86, 10; 109, 4.

[5] Ibid., I. 163, 3.

[6] *Rig Veda*, X. 129.

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the personality and energy of the Hebrew Jehovah;[1] hymns in which creative Mind is adored as "God above all gods."[2] Rude as they were, these psalmists had a profound veneration for the power of Thought. Their constant prayer was for intelligence; their praise, a distinct recognition of the creation of all things by mind. The very name they gave to prayer (mantra) had the same meaning. And as, in later times, the gods were believed subject to the powers wielded by intense mental concentration, so prayer, the earliest form of such concentration, was held in Vedic times to possess a similar mastery.[3] The word Brahma, probably derived from the root *brih*, meaning upward movement or endeavor, was first used to designate this intelligent energy of prayer;[4] and it was this very word that grew to be the highest name for deity, thus identifying God with conscious, efficient Mind. First, there was a Lord of Prayer, Brahmanaspati, perhaps as bearing upward the devotion of the worshipper; then the power of devotion considered as the might of the gods; and finally Brahmâ, the prayer-deity, absorbs them all. And so this Name above all their names meant the divinization of devout thought, meant intelligence in the unity of its essence and the fulness of its life.

But even Brahmâ was held amenable to all deeper "devotion" than his own. For the worship of intelligence involved from the first the right and power of

[1] See hymns quoted by Maury, *Croyances et Légendes*, p. 120.

[2] *Rig Veda*, X. 121, translated by Müller.

[3] *Rig Veda*. I. 67, 3, "Prayers uphold the sky." See Roth, *Brahma und die Brahmanen*, in *Zeitsch. d. D. M. Gesellsch.*, I. 66–86.

[4] Roth, as above. Brahma (neuter) becoming Brahmâ (masc.), which meant, first, the pronouncer of the prayer; whence, later, Brahmanas, the priesthood. Haug (*Brahma und die Brahmanen*, 1871) derives the word from *vrih*, meaning "to grow." The combination of these two ideas, "to aspire" and "to grow," is the noblest basis of the religious sentiment.

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man to change his ideals, and supply his faith, not with new symbolic forms only, but with fresh conceptions and names of deity.

Through the mystical depths of their own thought, following its intuitions of being and cause, and yearning to find those ultimate truths in which it could rest, the later speculative students of the Veda, many of whom were poets also,[1] pursued their way. The typical form of philosophy to which their studies gave rise is the Vedânta, "end, or scope, of the Veda." The search for essential being.

They saw that behind all forms of existence there was pure substance, not to be qualified nor defined, — unconditional Being, whereof we can only say, *It alone truly and perfectly is*. "Of all mysteries, I am silence," says the divine One in the Bhagavadgitâ. But there was a closer mystery than silence: a solution of all questions, speaking in all beings and worlds, yet escaping every limitation, whether by name or by thought, and comprehended only in the breathings of inward aspiration. And, that they might not seem to limit this "Soul of All" by terms that suggested human distinctions and conditions, they were apt reverently to speak of God, or Brahma, in the neuter; saying, as we also do, "It" and "That," whenever moved by deeper awe; or "This" rather,

[1] I speak here of the writers of the Upanishads (*lit.* Sittings): philosophical poems, belonging, according to Müller, Lassen, and other high authorities, to the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries before Christ. A list of these poems, 149 in number, is given by Müller in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* for 1865, and an analysis of the more important in Weber's *Indische Studien*. In preparing these chapters on Hindu philosophy, I have used translations of the principal Upanishads by Röer and Weber; the Sutras of Kapila, by Ballantyne; and the Bhagavadgitâ, by Lassen, Wilkins, and Thomson. For the Vedânta, or Uttara Mimânsâ philosophy, the authorities are the Brahma-Sutras, ascribed to Vyâsa, of which an account is given by Colebrooke, *Essays*, vol. i., and the Upanishads.

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when the awe deepened into a recognition of natural intimacy or even inseparable union; plainly meaning therefore by the neuter not an emptiness, but a fulness; not neuter as by death, but as by life; not as lowest gender, but as making gender trivial through that which *transcends* generation, the essential ground of personality itself. "The truth of truth;"[1] "The Unmanifested One;"[2] "Greater than what is great;"[3] "Higher than thought;"[4] "Different from what is known, beyond what is not known;"[5] "More distant than what is distant, yet near, in the very heart;"[6] "Unknown to those who think to know, though verily ear of the ear, eye of the eye, mind of the mind, speech of speech, life of life,"[7]—such the negation of every possible limit, by which they sought to express the necessity of Absolute Being, as condition of all believing and all thinking. Nor did they fail to put this negation strongly, at some points, as later philosophy has done, and to declare that "Not-being" (*asat*) was the ground of Being (*sat*);[8] a formula which then meant, as it now means, simply the eternal need of a deeper foundation for thought than any definite specific forms of thinking; and for being, than the limited modes under which we conceive it. The neuter Brahma meant reality itself, that which makes all existences contain more than comes and goes. It must be interpreted by such sentences as these: "The highest Brâhmana of the wise is the *Right*, the *True*. Through Truth the wind blows, the sun shines. Truth is the support of speech. By it the universe is

1 *Brihad Upanishad*, II. ii. 20.
2 *Mundaka Up.*, II. i. 2.
3 *Manu*, XII. 50.
4 *Mitri Up.* (in Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, I. 273).
5 *Kena Up.*, I. 3.
6 *Mundaka Up.*, III. i. 7.
7 *Kena Up.*, II. 3; I. 2.
8 *Châṅdogya Up.*, VI. 1. So *Rig Veda* X. 72, 2.

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upheld. It is highest of all."[1] "Falsehood is encompassed by Truth. It harms not him who knoweth this."[2] "The eternal world is theirs, in whom is no crookedness, no delusion, no lie."[2]

One Absolute Reality; unchangeableness of Truth; imperishableness of Substance, — this was what these mystical half-poets, half-philosophers, would affirm; this was what they breathed silently in the sacred syllable Om; whereof they said that "it contained all the gods,"[3] and that "as the palâśa leaf is supported by a single pedicel, so the universe by Om."[4] This was what they spoke aloud in the neuter "Tad," or *That*. "Into *That* (One) all This (Universe) enters, out of *That* it beams. *That* is what was and shall be."[5] It was what they meant by saying, "The indestructible One is verily without form, or life, or mind, or origin, self-existent spirit."[6] "There is another name, different from the definition, 'He is not this, He is not that,' — namely, the truth of Truth."[7]

"I am that I am." This was the highest Hebrew affirmation of deity. "I am that which is: no mortal hath lifted my veil," — this was the Egyptian. "Essence, *Tò ón*," — this the Greek. "The way of Nature and Reason," — this the Chinese. "Substance; the Real; the Absolute," — this the ultimate of our Western religious thought. And all these alike reach behind individual forms of deity, to the ground of being itself. Thus the neuter Brahma has lived on, repeated under different forms through the ages; for without a basis in that which *must be*, and which no special will can change nor

The absolute in different faiths.

[1] *Mahânârâyana Up.* (Weber, II. 80–95).
[2] *Brihad Up.*, V. v.; *Praśna Up.*, I. 16
[3] *Nirukta.*
[4] *Yâjnavalkya*: cited by Colebrooke, (I. 130).
[5] *Katha Up.*, IV. 9.
[6] *Mund. Up.*, II. i. 2.
[7] *Brihad.*, II. iii. 6.

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control, there is not only no ethical sanction nor conviction, but no proper sense of life itself as real.

The Vedantist concentrated his thought on this idea of pure substance, to some detriment of the rights of human personality. A tendency to this is apparent even in the interchangeableness of the Vedic deities; their lack of individuality; their flow into each other, like waves of a sea. It is matured in the pantheism of the Upanishads, where the individual fades into the One; and in the doctrine of Transmigration, which floats him away on tides of manifold unremembered lives and overmastering retributions. This failure of the right of personality, with all its melancholy consequences in the later institutions of the Hindus, was due not to the idea of one absolute substance, but to the lack of qualities requisite to balance their devotion to it, and bring adequate respect for persistence in definite forms of being and action. Nor must we fail to note that these contemplative men were moved by a profound sense of the necessity of freeing their conception of the divine substance of truth and right from all contingency on human passions and desires, from the limits which beset all individualities, from the very possibility of its sinking into a creature of caprice. Did they in this wholly forget the truth of personality? Did they not pursue that on which personality most depends? What is the meaning of the word as applied to God or to man? Here our Hindu mystics deserve attention.

Personal and impersonal.

All *special* forms under which deity is ordinarily conceived as "personal" are so many expressions of individualism, and so of exclusion and limit. Even for the moment they content us only because subtly identified by us with the real in-

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definable Infinite beyond them, which involves personality indeed, but *in an unlimited sense of the word*, transcending all specific forms of perception and volition. In other words, such *limitary* personal, or rather individual, deity is endurable to thought, only through tacit reference of it to unconditional Being, as a deeper ground. As of divine men we know that it is by partaking of the essential nature of truth, goodness, and right, that they are divine, and that their personality stands in these, — so of all we may ascribe to God, it is to be remembered that this or that divine manifestation is not right and true because God wills it, but that God wills it, — or, rather, it is in and of God, because it is right and true. "Even deity is divine," says Plato, "by the contemplation of truth."[1]

It is this final appeal to the Absolute that must offset a certain intense idolatry of specific volition and purpose which seems inherent in Christianity, and is mainly derived from its Semitic origin. The gods of Greece were themselves subject to the Oath: if they broke into its sanctuary of truth, they ceased to be gods. And so our reverence for deity demands that what is personal rest on what is *impersonal;* not in the sense of unintelligent, or *non*-personal, but of *universal* and *substantial;* being held divine, only as identified with principle and with essence. It will escape the illusion of imagining that the Absolute is empty, is nothing; and going behind such specific forms of individuated being and will as may, traditionally or directly, be set before it *as God*, affirm what transcends them all, that Truth, Right, Intelligence, in their substance, are God; recognizing also that every

[1] *Phædrus*, c. 62.

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one's real personality, his vital, enduring reality, rests on his participation in these.

Failure on the finite side.

Our contemplative Hindus, it is easy to see, were so fascinated by the idea of the infinite, that they failed of justice to the rights of the finite. Their introversion lacked the balancing force of scientific and social interests which other races and climes were to supply. Both Semitic and Aryan religions, on the other hand, have emphasized conscious self-assertion in limited forms of forethought and plan, as the very life of God; while the practical relations and aims of these energetic races have brought out the corresponding element in the life of man; so that they have now intense faith in an exact opposite to the Oriental ideal.

East and West.

This intense will-worship and work-worship is, however, as one-sided as the extravagance of the Hindu in the other direction. His Mimânsâs and Upanishads will at least admonish us that, under conditions most unfavorable to energetic moral life, men have thoroughly believed in an inherent right of truth as truth, as the substance of the world, to claim unlimited devotion; that they have believed in a reality beyond phenomena, a meaning for the conscience and the heart in what we cannot trace or define, compared to which rites, dogmas, traditions, expediencies, interests, will of masses, personal profit or personal idolatries, even life and all the worlds, were held shadowy and transient; and that they committed themselves to this as the substance of their own being. Our modern practical ideal is yet to be debtor to this Oriental dream. We do not disparage our civilization when

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we point out its actual defects. Palpable signs of its extreme need of the contemplative element appear, practically, in the dissipation of mind and morals by our vast material interests and competitions, and theologically in that utter dependence on the efficacy of a single body of ideal personal traditions and symbols, which has passed for the substance of saving faith. The remedy for both of these is in larger experience of the universalities of abstract thought. Eastern philosophy cannot teach us special ethics; but it brings into our view an unbounded faith in the reality of the absolute and eternal as perceived by thought. To forsake all dread of "abstractions," to cease regarding ideals as empty words, to become *realists* for these instead of nominalists, is as essential for the recognition of principles — truth, justice, humanity — in their clearness and power, as the spirit of love is to their application; a truth which the popular religion, in our day, stands greatly in need of embodying in its doctrine. That our practical resources are so vast, calls for all the greater clearness of conviction, breadth of idea, liberty and self-respect, in order to the discovery of their real uses. And the first condition is that the abstract become intensely real; the impersonal, sacred; truth, its own authority. This is our guarantee of intellectual and spiritual progress.

"Nowhere," says Quinet, "has there been made such lofty and solemn affirmation of the rights of essential being as in India."[1] Brahma as soul.

The faith of these dreamers was in no unreality, in no mere dead substratum of formulas and words; the very opposite. The ultimate of their thought was "Soul." This is their sacred, central, ever-recurring,

[1] *Génie des Religions*, p. 133.

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final word. The same terms, *âtman*, *purusha*, which expressed the spiritual essence in man, were carried up to the deeps of Infinite Being, to affirm there also what we mean by life, in the fullest sense of Mind.[1] The Brahma Sutras, or special Vedânta aphorisms, are careful to prove, against the supposed negations of the Sânkhya, that deity is mind, "the omnipotent, omniscient, sentient cause."[2] The Bhagavadgitâ speaks of the "eternal person;"[3] the Upanishads, of the "light which shines everywhere, seen within the solar orb and the human eye, in heaven and throughout the world, intelligent, immortal, and for ever blest."[2]

The whole aim of the Brihad Upanishad is to teach that Life is the substance of all things and master of death: —

"Life is verily oldest and best."

"The sun rises out of life and sets into life; this the sacred law; it sways to-day and will sway to-morrow."

"Life is the Immortal One, names and forms but conceal this."

"Unseen, He sees; unheard, He hears; unknown, He knows."

"Life is preserver of all forms; by life the universe is sustained."

"Life is the soul of the whole, is *all* the gods; so that it is not fit to say, 'sacrifice to *this*, to the *other*, god.'"

"As by footprints one finds cattle, so by soul one knows all things."

"Soul is the lord and king of all; as the spokes in the nave, so all worlds and souls are fastened in the One Soul."[4]

"Life (Prajâpati) has sway over all in earth and heaven. As a mother her children, protect us, grant us prosperity and wisdom."[5]

[1] "Atman" — probably derived from *ah*, "to breathe" (German, *athem*), or else "to think" — meant *life*, and was used to designate Soul, both individual and universal: it was the Self, the Ego, being even familiarly used as the first person. See Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 21 Fick's *Wörterb.*, p. 690. Eichhoff derives it from *at*, "to move."

[2] Colebrooke's Analysis of these Sutras, *Essays*, I. 338.

[3] Schlegel translates it *numen*. Other designations of deity are "Oversoul" and "Overworld." See, also, Thomson's *Bhagavadgitâ*, ch. viii. n. 1, on *purusha*. The *Surya Siddhânta* (XII. 12) is to similar effect.

[4] *Brihad Upan.*, VI. 1, 1; I. v. 23; I. vi. 3; I. iii; I. iv; I. iv, 7; II. v, 15.

[5] *Prasna Upan.*, II. 13.

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"He does not move, yet is swifter than thought: never have these gods, the senses, obtained him. He was gone before. In His rest He outstrips them. He is far, yet also near. He is within this All, yet beyond it."[1]

"As birds repair to a tree to dwell there, so the world repairs to the Supreme."[2]

"He is creator, and all that moves or breathes or sleeps is founded in him; and He is their goal; indestructible life and mind."[3]

The ideas of Absolute Reality and Infinite Mind, of Substance and Thought, are here reconciled. Intelligence and its unknown basis in the nature of Being are alike held fast as essential elements of deity.

Greek Plotinus said that the One could not dwell alone, but must for ever bring forth souls from himself.

Not less were love and desire affirmed to be stirring these deeps of Oriental deity: the longing to go out of self, the impulse to sacrifice the absolute for the phenomenal, unity for manifold life, is there.[4] The Hindu Kâma, like the Orphic Eros, is primal impulse to creation. A Veda hymn says of the self-existent: "Then first came love upon it, the new spring of mind."[5] And one of the Upanishads puts it thus: "The supreme Soul desired, 'Let me become many,' and performing holy work created all things."[6] Another speaks of his "love" as "all-embracing."[7] "The Self-existent said within himself, 'In austerity is not infinity. Let me sacrifice myself in all created things.'"[8] The endless theme of the Vedânta philosophy is the production

Manifestation through Love and Desire.

[1] *Vâjasaneya Sanh. Upan.*, 4, 5. [2] *Praśna*, IV.
[3] *Mundaka Upan.*, II. ii. 1, 2.
[4] Ritter, *Hist. Philos.*, II. ch. 2; *Śankara's Comment. on Brihad*, I. 4.
[5] *Rig Veda*, X. 129: Müller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 564. [6] *Taittariya*, II. 6.
[7] *Amriłanâda Upan.*, Weber, II. 62. [8] *Śatapatha Brâhmana*, Muir, IV. 25

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of all life, of mind, the elements, the worlds, the sexes, and the races, from the indestructible One.[1] "Prajápati causes his life to be divided, not content to be alone."[2]

But not even as products, distinctly as they were recognized as such, could phenomena be separated from that spiritual substance, whose universality was the most impressive of facts to the mystical sense.

"Immortal Brahma is before, behind; above, below; to right and left; all pervading: Brahma is this All, this infinite world."[3]

"Whoever looks for world, or gods, or beings, elsewhere than in the one divine Soul, should be abandoned by them. To know this is to know all."[4]

"The sea is one and not other than its waters, though waves, foam, spray, differ from each other."

"An effect is not other than its cause: Brahma is single without a second. He is not separate from the embodied self. He is Soul, and the soul is he."[5]

The form returns into the essence.

To this absorbing sense of the Unity of Life *in its essence*, forms and existences are but as mists rising from the sea, and returning in rain; like winds formed in the atmosphere and dying again into its stillness; not changing in nature, but only in form; the mists are still water, the winds are air.

According to Manu, "The Self-existent created the waters by a thought; and moving on the deep, as Nârâyana, the Spirit, placed therein a seed, or egg;[6] from which He is himself born as Brahmâ, who again reproduces himself as Mind, by whose devotion

[1] *Mundaka*, II. i.; *Brihad*, II. i. 20.
[2] *Brihad*, I. iv.
[3] *Mundaka*, II. ii. 11.
[4] *Brihad*, II. iv.
[5] Colebrooke's Analysis of the Brahma Sutras, *Essays*, I. 351.
[6] In the Orphic also, as in most other early cosmogenic systems, the egg is the natural symbol of production or evolution.

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all things are created from the bosom of the Supreme.[1] Here is the circle: creation, or rather evolution of forms, is but an endless transmutation within it; in substance, all things are the same. "The circle of being," says Yâjnavalkya, "revolves without beginning or end."[2] Says the beautiful Katha Upanishad: —

"The world is like an eternal holy fig-tree, whose roots are above, whose branches descend. In Brahma all worlds repose. None becomes different from this, their root. The universe trembles with awe, moving within this, its supreme life."[3]

When there is no longer any sense of separation from this divine Whole, nor of difference from the common ground and substance of all forms, — in other words, when the soul loses itself in the mystery of being, one and the same for all times and persons and things that are, and knows that this unsearchable depth is life and mind, — then is reached the goal of all its striving. The wonder and joy it feels in this participation is called by the Taittariya "the song of universal unity."[4]

All in God.

"As speech is common to all names, the eye to all perception of things, and to all actions an agent, so for all souls is there identity of spiritual essence. This is their Brahma."[5]

"The same that is here is there also. The same that is there is here. He is but passing from death to death who sees difference in Brahma."

"This Soul of all *is* to-day, will be to-morrow. As water running off into valleys is scattered and lost, so do men run after differences, beholding attributes as apart from this. But the soul of the wise, who knows what is the same, is like pure water on the ground that remains in its place, alike and undispersed."[6]

[1] *Manu*, I. 8–18. So the *Surya Siddhânta*, XII.
[2] *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 124.
[3] *Katha*, VI. 1, 2.
[4] *Taittar.*, III. x. 5.
[5] *Brihad*, I. vi. 8.
[6] *Katha*, IV. 10, 13, 14.

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"He who, dwelling in all elements and forms and knowledge, whom they do not know, whose body they are, who from within rules them,—*He* is thy soul, the inner ruler, immortal. There is none that hears or knows, but him. Whatever is apart from him comes to nought."[1]

Human individuality.

Yet it is an error to suppose that spiritual pantheism is inconsistent with belief in individual existences. It simply regards them as one in spiritual essence, the ultimate common nature of human and divine; and holds that they have no real being independent of Infinite Spirit, which must for ever be One. The Vedânta abolishes distinctions in *deity* only, as the ideal of devout aspiration, and as that ground of reality which must be one and the same for all.

Divine transcendence.

Nor does deity, thus conceived, become the mere *totality* of these distinctions, nor yet their mere *identity*. Brahma transcends all definite factors that can be summed up, as finite addition can never reach infinity, nor even approach it. He absorbs all, yet transcends all; and this not only as the infinite, but as the One.

If we observe our own mental processes, we shall find that we do not conceive *unity* as a mere sum of component parts. Always it appears as a different and higher fact. The orchestral chord is more than the sum of those tones which blend in it; the roar of the sea than the wave-plashes it gathers into one; the articulate word of history than the mere successive syllables of the ages or races. The very spark is more than flint added to steel; the salt than acid mixed with base. So Brahma as the Whole must mean *more* than the aggregate. The One has not the limitations

[1] *Brihad*, III. vii. "Soul is uncreate and immortal" (Plato, *Phædr.* c. 53).

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of the parts. It absorbs them, but it rules them and lifts them into higher meaning. And this is as fully recognized by the Vedantists as the non-difference of the soul from the Supreme.

Again let us hear the Katha Upanishad: —

"Upon Him all the worlds are founded; none becomes different from him. Yet as the one sun, eye of the world, is not sullied by the defects of the eye or the world, so the Soul of all beings is not sullied by the evils of the world, because it is also without it. Being of every nature to every nature, the One Soul is also without them, in its own." [1]

"Make known to me the Being different from this whole of causes and effects, past, present, and future." [2]

"They who know Brahma in this universe as different from it become free." [3]

"The soul, immersed in things, is wretched in its helplessness: when it sees the supreme Soul as different from these, and His glory, its grief ceases." [4]

Both aspects are blended in the "divine wisdom" of the Bhagavadgitâ: —

"The Supreme Soul is without beginning; not to be called existent or non-existent; possessing every sense, yet separate from them all; apart from, and yet within all; both far and near; not divided among beings, yet *as if it were*." [5]

"Behold this my kingly mystery. All things exist in me. My spirit which has caused them sustains them, yet does not dwell (confined) in them. Everywhere I am present in manifold forms, by reason of being single and separable from them."

"I am the sacrifice, the fire, the incense. I am the father, the mother of this universe; the mystic doctrine, the syllable Om, the Vedas; the path, the support, the master, the witness, the habitation, the refuge, the friend; origin, and dissolution, and inexhaustible seed. I am ambrosia, and death; what exists and what exists not; the soul, in the heart of all beings; beginning, middle, and end." [6]

[1] *Katha*, V. 8–11. [2] Ibid., II. 14. [3] *Svetâsvatara Up.*, I. 7. [4] Ibid., IV. 7.
[5] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. xiii. This poem is not a Upanishad, nor purely Vedantic; yet it follows our present line of thought.
[6] Ibid., IX. X.

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What is here meant is not the mere indifference of all things, but their *ideal;* since the "Holy One" also declares himself to be the *Best* in each form and kind.

"Among lights, I am the sun; among mountains, Meru; among waters, the ocean; among words, the monosyllable Om; among forms of worship, silent worship; among letters, A; among seasons, the spring; splendor itself among things that shine; silence, among mysteries; the goodness of the good, the knowledge of the wise."

He continues:—

"I have made and still uphold this universe by one portion of myself."[1]

So in the "Hymn of Purusha," where the Supreme is described as sacrificing himself for the creation and support of all worlds, it is said:—

"But Purusha (the spirit), who is all that was, is, or shall be, is above this all. The creation is but the quarter of his being: the other three parts are eternal in the heavens. Ascending with these three parts, He is above and beyond the world: the fourth part remains below to be born and die by turns."[2]

A later treatise, not Vedantic, shows how the divine could be conceived as one with the world, and yet above it:—

"As sound in tunes, as fruit in its flavors, as oil in sesame-seed, so God exists in the world, yet in such wise that He may be separated from it. He remains unchanged in all his works, just as the sun does, while flowers open and shut in its presence."[3]

Such is the transcendence to all forms and worlds here affirmed of immanent Mind. In this oneness *with* the conceivable universe, it is not forgotten that there must also be exaltation *above* it, unfathomed life beyond.

[1] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. x.
[2] Burnouf's translation, in *Introd. to Bhâgavata Purâna.*
[3] *Śiva Gnân Pothâm*, in *Amer. Oriental Journal*, vol. iv.

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For such absorbed contemplation of the Absolute and One, all sense of limit ceased; the finite self was felt no more; the infinite of thought extinguished its claims. There was still âtma, *a* self; but not the private, individual interest that bore the name. Relative, conditional existence was merged in the spiritual essence, felt as All in all, the one inclusive constitutive principle, by and through which the sense of being was possible. "I distinguish not myself," says the disciple of unity, "from this whole." To soul all has become soul; mind has recognized its identity with the universal force, the primal, pervasive, and ultimate reason of all existence. How should it speak of any form of mind as apart from this, which is the substance of Mind? "How," asks the Brihad, "should one know [as an intrinsically separate object] Him by whom he knows?"[1] "The eye cannot see itself. How can we see the soul which enables us to see?"[2] The sense of absorption.

It lies in the direct line of present scientific tendency that we should come to recognize the unity of mind, by observing that all phenomena are differing expressions of one Force, which can be no other than Thought. The correlation of physical forces is pushed forward and upward, in the hope of including that which in fact contains and conditions them all; but the result can only be demonstration, even to the understanding, that molecule and protoplasm cannot dispense with intelligence, and that all cosmical forces are identical with mind. The unity of mind.

Meanwhile, as we are now indicating in Oriental thought, intuition and contemplation are beforehand with science, and reach the result from a side which

[1] *Brihad*, II. iv. 14. [2] *Śiva Gnân Pothâm.*

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precludes materialism. Speculation and sentiment have thus foreshown the steps of experience throughout human history. Man is divinely prescient of his infinity as mind, as soon as he begins to meditate and aspire.

Let us do justice to this dream that drew the Hindu seers upward through their morning twilight, before the day of science and free intercourse of nations could rise upon the East. That twilight was cheered by rays which are somewhat intercepted in our Western spectrum thus far, and which they may help us to bring out.

The gift of the East.

"I distinguish not myself from the whole." This is not analysis; it is not science. Quite as little is it Hebrew fear, or Christian prayer, or Greek self-assertion, or modern self-dissection. It is not philosophy as the clear, cold understanding defines the term; nor piety in the sense of a worship of definite will, which knows a present deity only as one who *may* be absent. But it is the eternal poet, child, saint, lover, in man. It is the loss of self in the infinite of aspiration and faith. It is the free flow of our life into the grander life it sees and loves. The voice of the Eternal, alone heard, takes up the human into itself, and the poet's tongue can but echo its words: —

> "I am what is and is not. I am, — if thou dost know it,
> Say it, O Jellaleddin, — I am the Soul in all."

Knowing and being.

Is not man of one nature with what he worships? Where his faith reposes, *there* and *that* is he. So these Eastern mystics do not hesitate to say: "Whoso worships God under the thought, 'He is the foundation,' becomes founded; under the

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thought, 'He is great,' becomes great; or under the thought, 'He is mind,' becomes wise."[1] "Whoever thus knows the supreme Brahma becomes even Brahma."[2] It is only the prevalent habit of associating self-assertion with whatsoever is said or done, that makes language like this, in any religion, shock and repel. It is perfectly natural to the poetic sense, to the spiritual imagination, to the spontaneity of faith and the self-surrender of love. It is not "self-deification," but that very spirit by which alone, in any age or people, the vice of self-worship is to be escaped.

Not yet have we heard any better statement of the relation of individual to universal life than this: —

"Round and round, within a wheel, roams the vagrant soul, so long as it fancies itself different and apart from the Supreme. It becomes truly immortal, when upheld by him."[3]

"As oil in sesame seed is found by pressure, as water by digging the earth, as fire in the two pieces of wood by rubbing them together, so is that absolute Soul found by one within his own soul, through truth and discipline alone."[4]

"The soul must churn the truth patiently out of every thing."[5]

The poet does not forget that this is the end, not the beginning, of human endeavor; and must come by paying the price.

To know truth is to become truth.

The earnestness of this aspiration appears in the stress everywhere laid upon the sufficiency of really *knowing* and *seeing* truth. The modern or Western mind, concentrated on action, taught by its theology to distrust intellectual intuition in religious belief, finds it hard to do justice to the ancient principle, "Whoso knows or sees

[1] *Taittariya*, III. x. 3.
[2] *Mundaka*, III. ii. 9
[3] *Śvetâśvatara*, I. 6.
[4] Ibid., I. 15.
[5] *Amritanâda Upan.*, Weber, II. 62.

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truth *becomes* truth." But if this principle was not moral power, how came it to be, as it certainly was, the resort of thoughtful men who sought to comprehend and master the ills of life? What must *they* have meant by "knowing," who said, "Whatever nature one meditates on, to that nature he goes: he who meditates on God attains God"?[1] The Semitic myth of the Fall of Man separates, even to antagonism, the tree of knowledge from the tree of immortal life. Here is a deeper synthesis, that makes the two to be one and the same.

There is a worship of knowledge which is not pride of understanding, but sincerity of mind, — the longing to escape falsities, the sway of the will by a supreme necessity of living by truth. "Truth alone, and not falsehood, conquers: by truth is opened the path on which the blest proceed."[2] "No purifier in the world like knowledge."[3] In the simplest and purest form of conviction, to *know* is not divorced from *to be;* in other words, the life goes into the thought, and is one with it. And this sacred unity of Thought and Being attends the highest philosophy as well. Plato distinguishes "true science" from "opinion," affirming that in this way to know truth is to become truth. Of like purport is his great ethical postulate, that vice is but ignorance; none who see the beauty of virtue being capable of violating her laws. "Wisdom," in the Hebrew Apocrypha, shines with the same adequacy, reflected in large measure from the Hellenic mind. "She is the brightness of the Everlasting Light; and, being but one, she can do all things; and in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them

[1] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. viii. [2] *Mundaka*, III. 6.
[3] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch iv.

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friends of God and prophets." "Bondage," says Kapila, "is from delusion."[1] "Whoso knows is emancipated, and thirsts no more."[2] Spinoza answers across the ages that the knowledge of God is one with loving Him. And the Christian mystic, of whose genius the fourth Gospel is the product, puts into the lips of his ideal "Word" this truth of universal religion: "Ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free."

"The truth of being and the truth of knowing," says Bacon, "is all one. A man is but what he knoweth. For truth prints goodness; and they be the clouds of error that descend in storms of passions and perturbations."[3]

To be what one knows to be real is for ever the goal of noble effort, simply because it is implied in the unity and integrity of thought. Nothing is really known so long as it stands aloof, as mere distinction from the thinker, an external object only. Mind can know only by *finding itself* in the thing known. Nothing is really *thought* by us, whose being is not made mystically one with our thought, through the common element which makes knowledge possible. Nothing is really *spoken* or *named*, unless the word or name is in some sense merged in the reality it would express. Hence, for Vedantic piety, the name needed not to be spoken, but breathed only. "The best worship is the silent."[4] Hence, too, the significance of names and even syllables for Oriental contemplation, as carrying with them something far deeper and more real than an arbitrary symbolism for social convenience. Thinking, naming, knowing, are the ideals

[1] Kapila, *Sânkhya Aphorisms*, III. 24.
[2] Ibid., II. Introduction.
[3] *Essay in Praise of Knowledge.*
[4] *Bhag. Gîtâ*, ch. x.

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of contemplative life. To identify them with *being* was to prove them earnest and devout.

Is not all intense faith, will, love, identified with its ideal purpose? Does it not make thought one with thing, knowledge with what it knows, and the name with what it means?

We know truth by participation, not by observation. To be *absorbed into* our idea or principle, so that it is the life of our life, to find it the substance of our path and opportunity, — this, not the mere perception of it as an object, is to know it. Of God what else can we know, save what we have found as life, ideal or actual, in ourselves?

Indispensable to universal religion is the unfailing faith of all mystics, that to know and to be are one.

Search for truth.

Veda, Upanishad, Sutra, — poetry, philosophy, prayer, — are possessed by the infinite desire for spiritual knowledge. With incessant questioning they beset the mystery of being. The Śvetâśvatara opens thus: "The seekers converse together. What form of cause is Brahma? Whence are we? By whom do we live and where at last abide? By whom are we governed? Do we walk after a law, in joy and pain, O ye knowers of God?" And the Kena thus: "By whom decreed and appointed, does the mind speed to its work?" The Mitri asks: "How can the soul forget its origin? How, leaving its selfhood, be again united thereto?" In Yâjnavalkya's Code, the munis inquire of their chief: "How has this world come into being, with gods, spirits, and men; and how the soul itself? Our minds are dark: enlighten us on these things."[1]

[1] *Yâjn.*, III. 118.

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In the Vedânta poems, wise men and women propound questions, and are answered by wiser ones, or ask in vain. Experience is revealed, foolishness confounded. "Answer truly, or thy head shall fall down," say these saints to each other, let us hope symbolically. The problems that all generations must meet are stated, solved, or left reverently in the care of the Unknown. "How shall death be escaped, and what are the fetters of life? What is the light of this soul, when the sun and moon have set? On what are the worlds woven and rewoven? What is this witness, ever present, the soul within each? If, O venerable one! this whole world were mine, could I become immortal thereby?"[1]

The wise answer wisely, and the questioner is dumb.

"The king of the Videhas sat on his throne. Then came Yâjnavalkya. 'Why hast thou come, O Yâjnavalkya? Is it seeking cattle, or with subtle questions?'—'Even both, O king of kings!'—'*Let us hear what any has taught thee.*'"[2]

The boon the king asks of his seers is that he may question them at his pleasure. "O sages, whoever is best knower of Brahma, shall have a thousand cattle, their horns overlaid with gold." "As a warrior rises with arrows, and binds the string to his bow, so will I rise before thee with two questions," says Gargi, the daughter of Vachacknu; "do thou make answer." "Ask on, O Gargi!" And questions and answers lead on through the circle of being, resting at last in the "imperishable One, who unseen sees, unheard hears, unknown knows, beside whom there is none that sees, or hears, or knows."[3]

[1] *Brihad*, III. IV. VI. [2] Ibid., IV. I. [3] Ibid., III. viii.

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"The wise does not speak of any thing else but the Supreme, his delight is in the soul; his love and action also."[1]

The earliest writers about the Hindus inform us that this people spent their time conversing on life and death. These lively Greeks were profoundly impressed by the absorption of the Brahmans in the thought of immortality. Megasthenes noted their frequent discourse of death as the birth of the soul into blessed life. And Porphyry marvelled at their passion for yielding life, even when no evils pressed on them, and their efforts to separate the soul from the senses, esteeming those who died to be happiest, as receiving immortal life.

Nachikétas questions death.

Nachikétas, having earned the promise of a boon from Yama, or Death, demands to know if the soul is immortal. And Death replies:[2]—

"It is a hard question: the gods asked it of old. Choose another boon, O Nachikétas! do not compel me to this: release me from this."

N. "The gods indeed asked it of old, O Death! And as for what thou sayest, that 'it is not easy to understand it,' there is no other speaker to be found like thee, O Death! there is no other boon like this."

Y. "Choose, O Nachikétas! sons and daughters who may live a hundred years; choose herds of cattle, elephants, gold, horses, celestial maidens; choose the wide-expanded earth, and live as many years as thou wilt. Be a king, O Nachikétas! on the wide earth; I will make thee enjoyer of all desires; but do not ask what the soul shall be after death.

N. "All those enjoyments are of yesterday: perishes, O thou end of man! the glory of all the senses; and more, the life of all is short. With thee remain thy horses and the like, with thee dance and song.

"Man rests not satisfied with wealth. If we should obtain wealth and behold thee, we should live only so long as thou shalt sway. The boon I choose is what I said.

[1] *Mundaka*, III. i. 4.

[2] *Katha Upan.*, I.–III.

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"What man living in this lower world, who knows that he decays and dies, — while going to the undecaying immortals he shall obtain exceeding bliss, — who knows the real nature of such as rejoice in beauty and love, can be content with a long life?

"Answer, O Death! the great question, which men ask, of the coming world. Nachikétas asks no other boon but that, whereof the knowledge is hid."

V. "One thing is good: another thing is pleasure. Both with different objects enchain man. Blessed is he who between these chooses the good alone. Thou, O Nachikétas! considering the objects of desire, hast not chosen the way of riches, on which so many perish.

"Ignorance and knowledge are far asunder, and lead to different goals. I think thou lovest knowledge, because the objects of desire did not attract thee.

"They who are ignorant, but fancy themselves wise, go round and round with erring step, as blind led by the blind. He who believes this world exists, and not the other, is again and again subject to my sway.

"Of the soul, — not gained by many, because they do not hear of it, and which many do not know, though hearing, — of the soul, wonderful is the teacher, wonderful the receiver, wonderful the knower. The knowledge, O dearest! for which thou hast asked, is not to be gained by argument; but it is easy to understand it when declared by a teacher who beholds no difference in soul. Thou art persevering as to the truth. May there be for us another inquirer like thee, O Nachikétas! Thee I believe a house with open door.

"The wise, by meditation on the unfathomable One, who is in the heart, leaves both grief and joy: having distinguished the soul from the body, the mortal rejoices, obtaining it in its subtle essence."

Nor is the questioner yet content. "Make known to me this being which thou beholdest, as different from this whole of times, of causes, and effects." Then follows the praise of essential being; of spirit, as of one nature with deity: —

"It is not born, nor does it die: it was not produced from any one, nor was any produced from it. Eternal and without decay, it is not slain, though the body is slain.

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"If the slayer think, 'I slay,' or if the slain thinks, 'I am slain,' then both of them do not know well. It does not slay, nor is it slain. Subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great, it abides in the heart of the living.

"He who is free from desire and grief beholds, through tranquillity of his senses, that majesty of the soul.

"Sitting, it goes afar; sleeping, it goes everywhere.

"Thinking the soul as bodiless among bodies, as firm among fleeting things, as great and all-pervading, the wise casts off all grief.

"The soul cannot be gained by knowledge of rites and texts, not by understanding of these, not by manifold science. It can be obtained by the soul by which it is desired. *His soul reveals its own truth.*[1]

"Whoever has not ceased from evil ways, has not subdued his senses, and concentrated his mind, does not obtain it, not even by knowledge."

"Know the soul as the rider, the body as the car; know intellect as the charioteer, and mind, again, as the reins. The senses are the horses, their objects the roads.[2]

"Whoso is unwise has the senses unsubdued, like wicked horses of the charioteer. But whoso is wise has the senses subdued like good horses of the charioteer.

"Whoso is unwise, unmindful, always impure, does not gain the goal, but descends to the world again. But whosoever is wise, mindful, always pure, gains the goal from whence he is not born again, the highest place of the all-pervading One.

"Higher than the senses are their objects, higher than their objects is the mind; intellect higher than mind; higher than intellect the great soul.[3]

"Higher than this great one the Unmanifested; higher than the unmanifested the Spirit;[4] higher than this is nought; it is the last limit and highest goal.

"Let the wise subdue his speech by mind, his mind by knowledge, his knowledge in the great soul; subdue this also in the placid Soul [peace of the soul].

[1] This is Sankara's understanding of the text; but Röer thinks, in common with Müller and Muir, that a more literal version would be: "It is attainable by him whom it chooses. The Soul chooses this man's body as its own." In view of the context, however, the meaning is substantially the same, — that the wise seeker finds God within, and not through outward revelations.

[2] Compare Plato in *Phædrus*, § 74. [3] The "rider." [4] *Purusha*.

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"Awake, arise, get to the great teachers, and attend. The wise say that the road to Him is as difficult to tread as a razor's edge."

"The wise who tells and hears the eternal tale, which Death related and Nachikétas received, is adored in the world of Brahma."

"It is evident," says Dr. Röer, the translator of this wonderful Upanishad, "that the Katha derives the knowledge of Brahma from philosophy, and denies the possibility of a revelation."[1] We should say rather it grandly identifies *knowledge* with revelation. Its God is revealed to the wise by their own nature.

"One's soul reveals its own truth; not to be gained by mere knowledge of Vedas, by understanding nor by science;" "not by word, mind, nor eye, but by the soul by which it is desired;" nor by intellect alone, but by "union of intellect with soul."[2]

There is nothing of which we read so much in this Hindu thought and worship as *Immortality*. It is the word for final beatitude, for the end of all human aspiration. "Whoso is one with the Supreme obtains immortality," is the burden of precept, philosophy, and prayer. "Immortal become those who know."[3] What meaning did they attach to the term?

The sense of immortality.

Certainly the idea of *self-conscious individuality* beyond death did not stand so definitely before these dreaming souls as it does before the sharper intelligence and the intenser individualism of the modern mind.[4] But this was simply because self-consciousness was not so definitely conceived as a "*present fact;*

[1] *Katha, Introd.* [2] Ibid., II. 23; VI. 12: II. 12.
[3] Ibid., VI. 9.
[4] It is denied in the *Brihad* (IV. v. 13) that after death there is any self-consciousness; but it is explained as referring to such as are become *pure soul*, — one with Brahma.

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because it is never definite to the contemplative imagination, which tends to escape it, rather than seeks to hold it fast.

On the other hand that anxious dependence on it which comes with the growth of the understanding, and the complexity and refinement of personal relation to men and things, did not trouble them with the doubts and fears which beset it in view of the mystery of physical death.

Difference of Eastern and Western consciousness.

It is here that the feeling of *personal liberty*, so much stronger in the Western than in the Eastern races, shows at once its value and its defect. Their belief in definite creation as an act of divine Will, for instance, so cherished by them, has this advantage over the Oriental belief in Emanation, that it expresses and develops the *human sense* of *free intelligent purpose;* and thus strengthens the hold of the individual soul on its own conscious existence, and its faith in its own continuance as a productive force. At the same time, this strong individuality, nurtured not only by the belief just mentioned, but in so many other ways, brings a certain sense of isolation. Self-consciousness becomes a treasure that demands profoundest care. It is besieged by anxieties and fears, arising from mysteries which the understanding, thus roused to full faith in itself, and in itself alone, is yet incompetent to fathom. But a larger liberty succeeds, which drops the burden. It comes of fresh self-absorption in ideas and principles, in the life of the whole, as the unity of God and Man.

The absence of this jealous watch over personal consciousness would naturally cause the Hindus to feel comparatively little interest in continued existence

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after death. Yet so strong is the desire of these dreamers for *real* being, so entire their faith that they are made for it, that they perpetually recur to the idea of *immortality;* haunted by the sense of a life beyond death or change. And it is not merely another name for the joy of losing conscious being in the life of Brahma.

For they followed the spirit through future lives; traced it back to past ones; believed in reminiscence of actions done in former states of being; shrank from future bonds of penalty for present deeds, as if they fully recognized that personality was somehow continuous through these manifold births. It was in fact associated with transmigration, if only as a doom to be escaped. But it would seem impossible that the goal which they yearned to attain beyond that, and which seemed to them worth the sacrifice of all positive special desires, could be other than a form of conscious being. It is certainly the longing of all mystical love and faith, to rest in no other object of thought, to be conscious of no lower form of being, than the One and Eternal. Yet they do not disconnect this rest, *even in conception*, from personal experience and the sense of *communion* with God. One of the Upanishads, for instance, describes poetically the soul of the just man as ascending to Brahmâ's world: there it is questioned by Him about its faith and knowledge, and, being wisely answered, is welcomed thus: "This my world is thine."[1]

Individual immortality.

As the old Hymns of the Rig Veda pray for distinct, conscious immortality in the "world of imperishable light, whither the fathers had gone before, and where all desires shall be fulfilled," — so even the abstrac-

[1] *Kaushitaki Upan.*, Weber, I. 395–403.

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tions of later philosophy glow with assurance, however ill-defined and mystical, of essential life as the crown of sacrifice and devotion. "On whatever nature thou meditatest at thy last hour, with desire, to that shalt thou go."[1] "The heavens are Light;"[2] "the highest thought is a drop of Light;"[3] and the departing spirit has a sunbeam for its guide.[4] "As a serpent casts its slough, so this body is left by the soul. Its immortal life is Brahma, even Light."[5]

Of the desire to keep track of the individual soul on a definite path beyond death, we shall speak elsewhere. But, after all, surely the vaguer sentiment of a natural confidence *in life itself* is nobler; leaving this invisible future, in its form and detail, to the benignity and wisdom of immortal laws; confident that these must involve what is best for the nature whose relations they unchangeably represent.

Immortality in the knowledge of God.

The Vedânta philosophy, in its highest form, affirms that the proper definition of Immortal Life is to know God, by discernment of the soul as real being.[6]

Mere continued existence, from world to world, did not, for such aspiration, constitute the substance or root of Immortality at all. It hardly entered as a noticeable element into the conception of this fulness of knowledge and bliss. No pains were taken to prove the fact. And the very thought of lapsing times and renewed births was to be escaped, for the pure sense of inalienable and eternal being. *To know one's self as one with necessary life* was the fact of Immortality, and the evidence of the fact, at once.

[1] *Bhagavadgitâ.* [2] *Brihad.* [3] *Tejovinda Upan.*, Weber, II. 63.
[4] Thomson's *Bhag. Gitâ*, note to p. 60; *Brahma-Sutras*, in Colebrooke, I. 366.
[5] *Brihad*, IV. 18, 7. [6] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 14.

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Manifestly the contents of the idea here indicated are not to be supposed the same, whenever and wherever the same terms are employed to express it. But, *as Idea*, it is for ever the essence of all spiritual evidence on this subject. How can we possibly know ourselves immortal, otherwise than by experience of what is imperishable, and by knowing that we are in and of it, and inseparable from it? "To know thyself immortal," said Goethe also, "live in the whole." Force of this evidence.

"Evidences of immortality" which do not meet these conditions of assurance are crude and imperfect: their defect of spiritual vitality and relation is fatal to them. Such are those which infer a future life for all men from traditions of a single miraculous resurrection; and those which rest on testimonies to the reappearance of many persons after their bodily death, as through some natural law; and those which proceed on the ground that we can be spiritually fed by the reflection of our curiosity or desire, or even by the echoes of our gossip, from beyond the veil. Of such physical evidences of mere continued existence, the Vedânta philosophy knows nothing. It does not seek its data on this external plane.

But of those higher forms of evidence, whose method, still the best we know, has the most intimate relation to essential truth and life, that older piety, like the best of every later faith, has full measure; though their practical contents in Hindu experience cannot of course compare with those of a larger civilization. The Sânkhya philosophy proves immortality from the effort we make to liberate ourselves from the senses; the Vedânta, from the reality of all spirit; Brâhmanas and Upanishads alike, from Illustrations.

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the knowledge of God in the soul; and one Vedic hymn, as Müller translates it, from death itself. "There was in the beginning no death; *therefore* no immortality."[1]

Soul itself was immortality, "indestructible, ancient," "not to be dissipated, not to be seized nor touched;" *soul* itself, in its essence one with the Supreme.[2] It is one's own soul that teaches this, "if he be desirous of immortal nature." "Wise, mindful, always pure, subduing the senses, fixed on God, one finds the place where fear is not; the goal, the refuge, the serene Soul: he escapes the mouth of death."[3]

The sum was this. To know the infinite and eternal in all, makes immortal life. The Bhagavadgitâ says, "He is bright as the sun beyond darkness at the hour of death."[4] And the Mundaka, "He is the bridge to immortality."[5] "When He is known," says the Kena, "as the nature of every thought, then immortality is known."[6] It is "the death of duality in the soul: when the notion of being different (in essence) from the Supreme ceases, the soul upheld by him becomes immortal."[7]

"Cast off thy desires as the serpent his slough: break but this bondage of the heart, thou art immortal here."[8]

"That Supreme Soul, whose work is the universe, always dwelling in the hearts of all beings, is revealed by the heart. Those who know Him become immortal. None can comprehend Him in space above or space below or space between. For Him whose name is the glory of the universe, there is no likeness."

"Not in the sight abides his form, none beholds Him with the eye. Those who know Him as dwelling within become immortal."[9]

[1] *Sansk. Lit.*, 560. [2] *Upanishads, passim; Bhagav. Gitâ.* [3] *Katha*, III. IV.
[4] *Bh. G.*, VIII. [5] *Mundaka*, II. ii. 5. [6] *Kena*, II. 4.
[7] *Brih.*, II. iv.; *Śvetâśvatara.*
[8] *Katha*, VI. 15. [9] *Śvetâśv.*, IV. 17–20.

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In that interior sense in which the eternal only is real, the transient is phantasmal. Conceived as manifold, transitional, not as one in essence, but as ever-flowing form, the world to the Vedântist was but a shadow. Its phenomena referred him to somewhat beyond, which they could but hint, which their changefulness suggested by contrast only. Every passing fact or form in its vanishing said: "Not in me thy goal, thy rest. I am but masking and disguise." We recall the cry of Job out of the depths of this sense of the perishable: — Mâyâ, the phenomenal.

"Where is wisdom, and where the place of understanding? It cannot be found in the land of the living.

"The deep saith, 'It is not in me;' and the sea saith, 'Not in me.' Destruction and death say, 'We have heard of its fame with our ears.' God only knoweth the way to it, He only its dwelling-place.

"Behold the fear of the Lord, that is thy wisdom; and to depart from evil, thy understanding."

The "wisdom" which the Aryan mystic, on his part also, could not find in the land of the living, nor in the sky nor sea, nor in destruction and death, was to him also a *reality;* and it turned the perishable to a shadow, only as knowing the unchangeable to be a reality. His "fear" was the fear of being swept from that foothold by the tide of fleeting forms. His "forsaking of evil" was in casting off delusion, and knowing truth as the one and imperishable refuge. The shifting play of forms in time and space, in that they were *not* truth in this sense, was illusion. Did they not change with the eye itself that beheld them? Of what could their flowing and flitting give assurance? This evanescence mocked the infinite thirst of man, and piqued it to negation. This was their

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mâyâ. It was coextensive with the universe of change. It was *unreality;* yet not in the sense in which one who had learned to associate great human interests with the visible world would use the word in contradistinction to *their* reality. It will be better understood in the sense in which it would be applied to the world in contrasting such reality with *its evanescence*, which in this point of view would become its *un*reality.

Its permanent meaning.

Mâyâ was not a declaration of nonentity, not a pure negation. It was part of the mystic's solution of his problem of aspiration *versus* imperfection, of ideal and actual, of the moral choice between a higher and a lower aim. Mâyâ was his explanation of that flicker of the senses which disturbed his contemplation, and mocked his effort to fix thought and heart on Being alone. His mastery of wandering desires, and sorrow, and evil, and of all that bitterness in the actual, which smote on his ideal hope, was in that word *Illusion*. It solved the mystery. It overcame the world. For it meant;—These things are not really as they seem. It is only that I see them so for the moment. Their sense is in what my soul shall make them mean through its oneness with the real; which I shall know even as it is when I am master of self and sense, and in knowing become.

Give us, what we are now attaining so fast, full understanding of material and social uses; turn the current of faith and work from the transcendental dream of the East into the positive and clear actualism of the West; yet this substance of the necessity which the believer in *mâyâ* felt, none the less truly stands fast for us also. And its uses remain; though

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what Goethe calls the "tenacious persistence of whatever has once arrived at actual being," the exactly opposite pole to that Oriental sense of instability and transience, has now become the all-controlling spring of thought and conduct.

Mâyâ, in its root, *ma*, meant at first *manifestation* or *creation*, marking these *as real;* then this reality considered in its *mystery*, the riddle which finite existence is to the sense of the infinite in man; and so, generally, the mystery of all subtle untraceable powers, — and from this meaning of the word come *magic* and *mage;* and last, in this completed mystic devotion, it meant the *illusion* that besets all finite things. Such the power of the spirit to take up the visible universe into its dream, to turn its concrete substance into shadow, its positive *real* into unreal, and dissolve the solid earth in the fervent heat of faith.

Meaning of the word.

Some have referred the complete conception of *mâyâ* to an advanced stage of Hindu philosophy. In the earlier Upanishads there is a certain realism in the idea of the world and of life; and they present these as *consubstantial* with God, rather than illusory in any absolute sense.[1] It has even been supposed — I cannot see with what reason — that *mâyâ* originated in the negations of Buddhism. But its substance seems to be inherent in the structure of the Aryan mind, after all; whose habit, even in its most practical phases, is to treat its present conception of a truth or a thing as partial

Function of Mâyâ in the Aryan mind.

[1] See Banerjea, *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, p. 386. Colebrooke (*Essays*, I. 377) says that *mâyâ* does not belong to the original Vedânta Sutras. It is very fully developed, however, in some of the later Upanishads, such as the Śvetâśvatara.

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and imperfect; in other words, as (so far) illusion in view of a better future one. On this habit of holding the facts of experience as provisional depends the power of progress which distinguishes it. This is no fanciful analogy. To the courage and energy of the Aryan race, as well as to its contemplative faculty, in the West as in the East, the actual is always plastic and convertible. It flits like dreams in the waking moment, before the higher possibility that beckons beyond. All is *mâyâ*, as contrasted with the permanence of productive Mind. Neither in speculation nor practice is any special form of being held to be independent of this all-revising, reconstituting force. The more it discerns of the world, the more intensely does it transfer reality from the conceptions that are behind to those that are before, and sweep these in turn into the same transforming flood. Mind makes, unmakes, and makes again.

Yet the true *limitation* of *mâyâ* comes through this very faith in mind as the only substantial reality and power; a fact which appears pre-eminently in the consciousness of the Indo-European. I refer to the claim of the individual soul to persistence, by virtue of holding in itself full *recognition* of this validity of mind. Consciousness of being, in other words, involves participation in being. No Eastern dream of universal metamorphosis, or of the unreality of definite forms or the evanescence of experience, is likely to shake the sense which culture is enforcing, of somewhat permanent in the subjective source of one's changing thought and growth, memory and desire. With us, as well as with these mystic dreamers, such words as "consciousness," "self," "identity," hover in a dim atmosphere of past changes and future possibilities. But the

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indefiniteness of these ideas is passing more and more surely into a sense of permanent relation to the whole; and *this sense* comes to be the real self-consciousness, giving sublimer meaning and validity to life as life. To have once arrived at personality, to generate the perception of being, and to have consciousness of it as real, is to partake of that reality. And whatever is achieved by this personality participates in like manner in *its* validity. So that even the fleeting detail of life and conduct assumes eternal meaning. The use of illusion is to deepen, not to destroy, this meaning; being genially interpreted as friendly to the soul, and the natural index of its perpetual growth. We may well believe that it had its helpful and hopeful aspects to the more contemplative Oriental mind also, seeking in its way to lose individual self-consciousness in the life of the whole.

Mâyâ was the fine sense of transition, of the flow of form into form, that makes each intangible and elusive; the sign of evanescence. In the delicate mythology of the Greek, it appears as mother of Hermes, who is messenger of the gods, and their deceiver also; the cheat of expectation, the thief of trusts; whose brisk and versatile genius can nevertheless draw music from the laggard tortoise of time. Analogues of Mâyâ.

It is *mâyâ*, too, that we trace in the keen dialectics of the Eleatic School, chasing time and space and all forms of perception through the vanishing points of transition, to end in the same sense of the phantasmal everywhere save in "the One."

And modern science comes back to *mâyâ* in its protean dance of forces; its metamorphoses and correlations, that prove the manifold to be illusory, and all phases of force to be in essence one.

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Its indispensableness.

The common sense of civilization is not at war with this ancient wisdom of Illusion. It needs no mystic to see that *mâyâ* is not to be escaped, is indeed the most practical of realities. Does not our so palpable and solid world change with the eye that looks on it? Does it not mock our fixed ideas and our stable definitions? Not even does gold mean gold. The boy's coppers are gold to him; but what are eagles to the miser? Are dollars wealth, tied round a drowning man's waist for preservation, and so dragging him down to loss of all? Are the shrewd shrewd? How the financial storm sweeps down the business colossus beneath petty men who trembled in his shadow! Room yet for thee, great Mâyâ, with the wisest of the children of this world!

Is not all our knowledge relative? Who of us sees the facts as they are? An owl's eyes peering into darkness detects what we cannot. Molecular immobility is an illusion. Every atom vibrates with cosmic and local movements, imperceptible to eye or ear. "The human organism reaches but a little way along the scale of sensibility." And the universe is aflame and vocal with subtler light and sound that it perceives not. What comes with the touch of the insect's antennæ, or the cilia of the rotifer? Our chemist knows what nature is made of, for his crucibles; but let him tell us what she is to the monad in the water-drop, and show the relations of that image to the world, as it stands in the thought that combines galaxies and æons as we do stars and hours. What is nature to deity, to the Soul that sees all as an Eternal Now? And beneficent Mâyâ still helps us to solve the problems of evil. For if sorrow and loss mean exactly what they seem, then what sense is there in our hope to find

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that in them which we see not? If inscrutable wrongs and vices are not to be newly read from a higher point of vision, then what are providence and growth, and how shall we justify existence itself? There is no solution of these mysteries till we take to heart the laws of illusion. Plutarch finely says, "Alter the nature of your misfortunes by putting a different construction on them." Always it is man's wisdom as well as relief to expect metamorphoses, and to deny stability of the hard solid facts that resist us. To read between these lines; to see loss as gain in the making, fate as freedom, failure as success, death as life, — thus still and ever to recognize illusion, — is the path to reality.

Very solid is granite, very rigid is fact; and you shall take men and things as they are. Undeniable indeed; but *how are* they? "Where the spider sucks poison, the bee finds honey," says the proverb. What we are, that we see; and, sooner or later, we find that the first step to knowledge is to doubt if things are what they seem. Under the thought of the Hindu mystic, that all below God is illusion, hides a secret that masters pain and loss, and turns hindrance to help. He saw that the permanent only was to be trusted; and his *mâyâ* meant that he knew whatsoever did not yield him this to be delusion and dream. Natural illusions have their protective uses, their fine adaptations and delights; recognized more and more, the larger the sense of practical capabilities in life. They gird it with delicate talismans and charms; soften rough contacts; hide sterner fates. All the more need, then, that, when we learn how they play with our credulity, we do not react to universal doubt, but pluck divine certainties even from the heart of our dreams. And

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in the rush and whirl of social machinery, the phantasmagoria of *things*, we want all the more of the transcendental conviction that there is pure reality in the best and highest *only*. It is better to believe the world and the senses to be illusory than to believe the eternal, the immutable, the ground of law and duty and faith, to be a dream.

The world inseparable from Brahma.

Hindu philosophy did not fail on this side. Creation indeed was illusion; yet it had its substance in a divine intent; and at least was not separated therefrom. It was Brahma's *own* mâyâ, his "breathing," his "sport," his "magic," and so within him still;[1] not the outside ball, made of nothing, and flung out of his hand to spin of itself. In the Hindu myth that God created the world "*by a thought*," there is even a deeper hold on the immanence of Spirit than in the Hebrew, that it was called into being by a "*word*,"—something sent out and away from the mouth, as it were. "God *said*, and it was," is the one: "God *thought*, and it was," is the other.

Semitic and Aryan ideals.

Hebrew religion, fervent and spiritual as it was, emphasized *separation* between God and the world, especially the world of man. It was the shrinking of the soul before its own ideal, in a deep sense of short-coming; and these seeds of fear and alienation in the religious sentiment grew into debasing theologies which no imperfect bridge-work of mediation or atonement can permanently redeem. Hindu belief emphasized *oneness* of God

1 "He who is only One, possessed of mâyâ, united with mâyâ, creates the whole." *Śvetâśvatara*, III. 1; IV. 9. "The Mâyâ of the Vedantists," says the Dabistân, "is the 'magic of God;' because the universe is 'his playful deceit.' He gives it apparent existence, himself the unity of reality; like an actor, passing every moment from form into form." *Dab.*, ch. ii. 4.

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with the world; even in the play of illusions seeking fearlessly for the reality they disguised. It lacked the awe the Semite felt in presence of his own conception of the Infinite. It was not a goad of self-condemnation like his stern moral law. And it could degenerate, though in different ways, into mythology and rite as superstitious as the Semitic. But its ground was faith, not fear; and now that religion, mature enough to dispense with schemes for "reconciling God and man," affirms, as its starting-point, the immanence of deity, it is simply resuming on a higher plane, and with practical insight, the truth which early Aryan philosophy instinctively divined.

I do not forget that idolatry of the Veda, which might seem to disprove these claims of devotion to the Spirit alone. In the wide freedom of discussion open to the Hindu schools, through endless subtleties of speculation on the primal questions of being and thought, the authority of this common bible, twisted and accommodated, like the Christian, in every way that teachers or times might demand, is for the most part accepted without question. The Vedânta commentators, especially, labor to prove that it is infallible and without human author, identical with "the eternity of sound;" and that the rishis, who are called makers of the hymns, really *saw* them only. How far this last theory implied that the human faculties of these inspired men were supplanted by supernatural vision, may not be easy to say. These are questions which bibliolatry raises in all religions. But the mystical worship of soul rose easily out of such conventionalism into the assertion of its own higher inspiration. Scarcely one of the Upanishads fails to urge the superiority of the science

Veda worship.

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of soul to the study of scripture, or else to imply this by the whole tenor of its thought. "Of what use," they say, "are the hymns of the Rig to one who does not know Him in whom all the gods abide?"[1] To one who said, "I know only the hymns, while I am ignorant of soul," a sage replies, "What thou hast studied is *name*. But there is something which is more than name."[2] "There are two sciences: the lesser comprehends the rituals, astronomy, the study of words, and the Vedas; the higher is the science by which the Eternal One is known."[3]

It may be of use to hear the testimony of the author of the Dabistân, who wrote two or three centuries ago, as to the spirit of the later Vedantists. He records a visit made to one of their schools with an eminent Hindu poet, who was filled with admiration at what he heard there, and said, "My whole life is passed in the company of devotees; but my eyes never beheld such independence, and my ears never heard any thing comparable to the speeches of these emancipated men."

A few passages brought together from the literature of this Spiritual Pantheism will show the meaning it gave to Soul, Duty, Deity, Life:—

The supreme soul.

"Whatever exists in this world is to be enveloped in the thought of the supreme Soul. Whoever beholds all beings in this soul alone, and the soul in all beings, cannot look down on any creature. When one knows that all is soul, when he beholds its unity, then is there no delusion, no grief."

"He is all-pervading, bodiless, pure, untainted by sin, all-wise, ruler of mind, above all beings, and self-existent. He distributed things according to their nature for everlasting years."[4]

"Adore Him, ye gods, after whom the year with its rolling days

[1] *Śvetâśvatara.* [2] *Chhandogya.* [3] *Mundaka*, I. i. 5. [4] *Vâyasaneya Upan.*

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is completed, the Light of lights, the Immortal Life. He is the Ruler and Preserver of all, the Bridge, the Upholder of worlds lest they fall." [1]

"The great, the Lord in truth, the Perfect One, the Mover of all that is, the Ruler of purest bliss, He is Light and He is everlasting. He, the Infinite Spirit, is like the sun after darkness. He is to be adored by the deity of the sun: from Him alone has arisen the ancient knowledge."

"By the Perfect Soul is all this universe pervaded. None can comprehend Him in the space above, the space below, or the space between. For Him whose name is infinite glory there is no likeness. Not in the sight abides his form. None beholds Him by the eye: they who know Him dwelling in the heart and mind become immortal."

"Without hands or feet He speeds, He takes. Without eye He sees, without ear hears. He is all-knowing, yet known by none; undecaying, omnipresent, unborn; revealed by meditation; whoso knows Him, the all-blessed, dwelling in the heart of all beings, has everlasting peace." [2]

"He is not apprehended by the eye, not by devotions nor by rites; but he whose mind is purified by the light of knowledge beholds the undivided One, who knows the soul. Inconceivable by thought, more distant than all distant things, and also near, dwelling here in the heart for him who can behold." [3]

"The wise who behold this Soul as the eternal among transient things; as the intelligent among those that know; as that which, though one, grants the prayers of many, — the wise, who behold the one ruler and inner soul of all, as dwelling within themselves, obtain eternal bliss; they, not others." [4]

"This is dearer than a son, than wealth, than all things; for this is deeper within. Whoever worships the soul as dear, to him what is dear is not perishable.[5] It is for the soul's sake that all are dear.[6]

"The soul is to be perceived only by its own true idea; and only by him who declares that it is real." [7]

"Truth alone, not falsehood, conquers. By truth is opened the road which the rishis trod, whose desires are satisfied, the supreme abode." [8]

[1] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 22.
[2] *Śvetâśvatara*, III. IV. VI.
[3] *Mundaka*, III. i. 7, 8.
[4] *Katha*, V. 12, 13.
[5] *Brihad*, I. iv. 8.
[6] *Brihad*, II. iv. 5.
[7] *Katha*, VI. 12, 13.
[8] *Mundaka*, III. 6.

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"Let one worship the Soul as his place, and his work shall not perish. Whatsoever he desires from the Soul, the same shall he obtain."[1]

"He gains that world and those desires which he imagines in his mind. Therefore let one who desires prosperity worship Him who knows the soul."[2]

"The wise who has studied the scriptures casts them by, as he who seeks grain the chaff."[3]

Soul is freedom.

"Yâjnavalkya, when asked how a Brahman can do without the sacrificial girdle, answered, 'The soul itself is his girdle.'"[4]

"They who fancy that oblations and rites are the highest end of man know not any thing good. The foolish ones go round and round, coming back to decay and death, oppressed by misery, as blind led by the blind."[5]

"There is a higher and a lower science: the lower is that of the Vedas, the higher that of the Eternal One."[6]

"Worshipping deities as if these were apart from themselves, the ignorant maintain their gods, as beasts support a man. It is not pleasant to such gods that men should know Brahma,"—and be free.[7]

"To behold the soul in itself alone is to subdue sin, not to be subdued by it."[8]

Soul is moral discipline.

"By holy acts shall one become holy, by evil ones evil. As his desire, so his resolve; as his resolve, so his work; as his work, so his reward."[9]

"Whoso has not ceased from evil ways shall not obtain true soul."[10]

Soul is prayer.

If prayer is aspiration to become one with ideal life, then this Vedantic pantheism is itself essentially a prayer. And its religious earnestness lifts up the old eternal cry for guidance, help, and rest. There is an old hymn perhaps relating to the last hours of life, which is often quoted in the Upanishads.

[1] *Brihad*, I. iv. 15.
[2] *Mundaka*, III. 10.
[3] *Amritanâda Up.*, V. 18.
[4] *Jabala*, Weber, *Indische Studien*, II. 75.
[5] *Mundaka Up.*, I. ii. 7, 8, 10.
[6] *Mundaka Up.*, I. i. 5.
[7] *Brihad*, I. iv. 10.
[8] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 23.
[9] Ibid., IV. iv. 5.
[10] *Katha Up.*, II. 24.

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It appeals to deity as dwelling in the Sun, whose outward light is invoked to give way to its spiritual meaning:—

"To me, whose duty is truth, open, O Sun! upholder of the world, the entrance to truth, hidden by thy vase of dazzling light. Withhold thy splendors that I may behold thy true being. For I am immortal. The same soul that is in thee am I. Let my spirit obtain immortality, then let my body be consumed. Remember thy actions, remember, O my mind! Guide, O Agni! to bliss. O God, all-knowing! deliver from the crooked path of sin."[1]

"As the birds repair, O beloved! to a tree to dwell there, so all this universe to the Supreme."[2]

"From the unreal, lead me to the real; from darkness to light, from death to immortality. This uttered overcomes the world."[3]

"There is no end to misery, save in knowledge of God."[4]

"'Thrice,' let the saint say, 'I have renounced all.'"[5] What was this absolute renunciation? It did not mean surrender of self-indulgence for the sake of practical uses. It meant rejection of the senses and the world altogether. His problem was to deliver his soul from all that was conditional, dependent, transient. And since he tracked these forms of experience through every phase of his being, it would seem at first sight as if he deliberately sought self-annihilation. But this could not be true in any recognized sense of the word. For he called the highest goal for which he strove beatitude, and its path emancipation. Its bliss was "knowing God," its end "immortal life." Renunciation.

"A hundred fold the bliss of those who are gods by birth, is one joy of him who reaches the world of Prajâpati. But the world of Brahma is the highest bliss of all."[6]

[1] *Brihad*, V. xiv; *Vâyasaneya Sanh. Up.*, 15–18.
[2] *Prasna Up.*, IV.
[3] *Brihad*, I. iii. 28. *Yajur Veda Mantras.*
[4] *Śvetâśvatara*, VI. 20.
[5] *Arunika Up.* (Weber, II. 178).
[6] *Brihad*, IV. iii. 33.

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I find no evidence that earnest men have ever made a religion out of the desire of nonentity. Mystics have always yearned to lose the sense of separate and limited selfhood in the depths of eternal and absolute being; and they have, as invariably, been charged with desiring to abolish personality. And the charge has usually come from those to whom the Absolute and Eternal was, as nearly as could well be, non-existent.

Not self-annihilation.

To me it is quite incredible that a religious philosophy, so absorbed in the idea of Infinite Life as this is, should aim at destroying, in any absolute sense, that very consciousness which revealed it. And can we suppose any one to be longing for nothing with his whole heart and soul? Great efforts have been made to prove the Buddhist Nirvâna such an irrationality as this.[1] But they are far from satisfactory, and do not prove any thing but the extreme difficulty of making the mystical consciousness of the Oriental mind stand in the clear definite moulds of Western thought.

It should be fully recognized that this ardent devotion sought not death, but life; not unreality, but reality; to escape error, perturbation, change; conceit of the understanding, idolatry of self, absorption in sense, and slavery to things. "Our fire is piety, and in it I burn the wood of duality; instead of a sheep, I sacrifice egotism. This is my *Hom*."[2]

Life in God.

The Alexandrian school of Greek thought was pervaded by this Oriental thirst for the One and Eter-

[1] Burnouf, Koeppen, St. Hilaire. But Duncker, Mohl, and Müller have fully shown the weakness of their interpretation.

[2] A Vedântist sage; quoted in *Dabistân*, ch. ii. 4. Hom is the sacrificial butter.

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nal. It pursued this "ecstasy," or identity of the soul with its ideal object as the only reality, with an earnestness of faith of which the Enneads of Plotinus remain a marvellous monument for all time. And the same spirit gave religious fervor to the noblest minds of Christian ages; to the freest of those whom the Church has refused to recognize, from age to age; a mystic passion for the Infinite that, however unacknowledged, has been the fountain of the ideal life in man.

The same in substance, however remote the practical Western mind from the life of the East, is Augustine's ejaculation: "Thou hast made us, O Lord! for thyself; and our souls are restless till they return to Thee." Mysteriously involved in the sense of immortality is a secret reminiscence of the "immortal sea which brought us hither." It haunts all religious imagination from the Vedic hymns down to Tauler and the Theologia Germanica; to Wordsworth and Emerson, and the devout sonnets of Henry Vaughan and Jones Very. Say the Upanishads: —

"He who has found God has ceased from all wisdom of his own; as one puts out a torch and lays it down, when the place he sought in the darkness is found." [1]

"As the flowing rivers come to their end in the sea, losing name and form, so, liberated from name and form, proceeds the wise to the Divine Soul." [2]

"By him who thinks Brahma is beyond comprehension is Brahma known. He who thinks Him comprehended does not know Him. Known as the one nature in every thought, He is truly known. By this knowledge comes immortal life." [3]

So sings the Sufi poet: —

"O Thou of whom all is the manifestation,
Thou, independent of 'thou and we,' Thyself 'thou and we,'—

[1] *Amritanâda.* [2] *Mundaka.* [3] *Kena.*

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Thy nature is the spring of thy being: whatever is, is Thou;
We all are billows in the ocean of thy being;
We are a small compass of thy manifested nature."[1]

And so the Christian mystic: —

"God is a mighty sea, unfathomed and unbound:
Oh, in this blessed deep may all my soul be drowned!"[2]

Here to abide, in the Spirit "that is without strife, without decay, without death, and without fear,"[3] was the goal of that old ceaseless yearning to escape what was called the "return to births," as involved in the "bonds of actions." In a similar light I would interpret a little devotee song, written by a late missionary at Benarès, embodying this Oriental piety. Its appeal to the religious sentiment shows the universality of the idea better than any philosophical statement could do: —

"The snowflake that glistens at morn on Kailâsa,
Dissolved by the sunbeams, descends to the plain:
Then, mingling with Gunga, it flows to the ocean,
And lost in its waters returns not again.

On the rose-leaf at sunrise bright glistens the dewdrop,
That in vapor exhaled falls in nourishing rain:
Then in rills back to Gunga through green fields meanders,
Till onward it flows to the ocean again.

A snowflake still whitens the peak of Kailâsa,
But the snowflake of yesterday flows to the main;
At dawning a dewdrop still hangs on the rose-leaf,
But the dewdrop of yesterday comes not again.

The soul that is freed from the bondage of nature,
Escapes from illusions of joy and of pain;
And, pure as the flame that is lost in the sunbeams,
Ascends into God, and returns not again.
It comes not and goes not; it comes not again."[4]

[1] *Dabistân.* [2] *Angelus Silesius.* [3] *Praśna*, V. 7.
[4] Buyers's *Recollections of Northern India.*

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I have indicated some of the realities the Vedânta philosophy was capable of seeing: I must note, also, what it failed to see. And here may be recalled an expressive myth which betrays the defect of self-conscious purpose and active will in Hindu character. Defect of purpose.

All manifestation is Brahma's "play," returning into his essence when the sport fatigues. In this childlike mythology, he must have alternation of waking and sleep. The life of the worlds, though it last for ages of ages, is but "Brahma's day:" a night must come when he must repose. That life fades when he slumbers, expands when he awakes; as when a torch is alternately kindled and extinguished, the light alternately radiates from the centre and is recalled. In the Hebrew myth of creation, the need of rest is ascribed to Jehovah also. But what we specially note in the Brahmanic conception is the absence of any idea of *purpose* in this universal Life. It proclaims no law of growth. It stirs no hope of human advancement. The spirit wakes, the spirit sleeps. That is all. Nowhere struggle or endeavor; nowhere work; nowhere progress recognized as the endless fact, the meaning of the world. On the contrary, there is involved in this movement a gradual degeneracy. And we find indeed the definite belief that man loses successively, in each of four consecutive ages, a quarter of the duration of his life: crime gradually increases, and the prevailing virtue is of a lower grade. In the first age, this virtue is devotion; in the second, knowledge; in the third, sacrifice; in the fourth, only almsgiving, as an external form. And so the only possible counteraction to this tendency, for the few who can escape it, is reverence for

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the immemorial customs of that first, happier age. Have we not here a philosophy of despair?

Yet a way of release from this apparent absence of all motive and purpose was really found in the ardent aspiration to union with deity, which has been described. Nor does confidence in the power of spiritual achievement seem to have been wanting, notwithstanding the theory that placed the ideal of such achievement in the past. For Brahmanical faith, however, the sphere of effort was not the visible world.

Sources of modern freedom from asceticism.

That all its earnestness and spirituality could not save this piety from ascetic extravagance was owing to the fact that it could not be directed to practical aims and social achievement. But our own interest in the visible and transient world is not a legacy that we have derived from any Oriental religion. We owe it neither to Judaism nor to Christianity; for the one did comparatively little to bring out the uses of the outward order of nature; and the other, in the person of its founder, pronounced the world to be under doom of speedy destruction. Judaism indeed has given an impulse to man's active powers by its idea of creation as an instant result of divine purpose and will. Hebrew belief in the personal energy and authority of God has doubtless helped develop corresponding qualities in the Western mind; and the humane motives for action, emphasized by Christianity, have seconded the practical tendencies of modern times. But, on the whole, we owe our faith in this visible world to Greek liberty and Roman law, to modern science and art, and to the opportunities of social good involved in the circulation of thought and intercourse of vigorous nations. It is mainly the gift of energetic *races*, and depends less on religious than on ethnological causes.

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In the circumstances of the Hindu, it was his special glory, as well as his peril, that every thing flowed to abstract ideas, to pure thought. As far back as the Greek invasion, Megasthenes found the Hindus spending their time in talking about life and death.[1] They are still, in their degeneracy, natural metaphysicians. Dogma is their staff of life. They draw water out of invisible wells, as we do out of visible ones, for daily drink. The deserts swarm with anchorets, practising strange rites and muttering spells. The city streets are perambulated by painted mendicants, rubbed down with ashes, and carrying skulls for drinking vessels. Ragged gosains sit by the waysides and under the trees, unfolding super-sensual ideas to rustic academies,[2] and visionary fakirs ply them with fables and dreams. The very children learn theological and philosophical sutras mechanically, as we do alphabet and multiplication-table.[3] They are still demonized by abstraction; despising practical limitations, ignoring tangible facts.

Of the opposite Hindu tendency.

Of course this national temperament has its higher and its lower forms. And as the passion for invisible mysteries degenerated into jugglery and magic, so it rose into the mystical aspirations of these poet philosophers and seers. There is indeed no form of religion thus far which has not had analogous results, if not in these extreme forms. Christianity, for example, has borne supernaturalism and ecclesiasticism as well as aspiration and sacrifice and love, having sown germs of bondage as well as of freedom.

[1] *Strabo*, XV. 59. [2] See Allen's *India*, p. 404; Buyers's *Northern India*.
[3] Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 74.

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Causes of asceticism.

The effort of Hindu devotees to escape the senses and the world of action has already been in part explained as a protest against the charms and temptations of a torrid zone. These ascetic disciplines were commensurate with the forces they sought to overcome. The very word for their austerity was *tapas*, or *heat*. They did not need to carry the imagination into other worlds, in order to locate their purgatories of fire. They recognized this world of sensuous nature as the thing they had to master. Their valor and faith lay in pronouncing the ever-present foe of freedom and purity an illusion, destined to vanish after all in the sole reality of spirit.

If in those times and in such a climate, there was wanting practical force to make nature *represent* moral and intellectual purpose, it was certainly much to believe so utterly as these ascetics did in the power of the ideal to *overcome* the world, to disenchant the soul from subjection to its masteries and spells. At the heart of Hindu religious consciousness was faith in the *omnipotence of thought*. Let us note the significance of this faith.

The primacy of thought.

The meaning of the world for each of us lies in his own thought concerning it. What the mind is to itself, such is the universe to the mind. The inward makes the outward. "We receive but what we give." In the child, "that best philosopher, who yet doth keep his heritage," the truth we here emphasize exists as unconscious instinct, and implicit wisdom. He is, in his own sphere, the "mighty prophet, seer blest." But it finds manlier play in the conscious use of materials for ideal ends. To this primacy of the inward forces, to this their

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power of creating the world in their own likeness, even the clearest practical perception and the largest social experience must hold fast, or else the "yoke" comes with the task; a weight, "heavy as frost, and deep as life." The secret of power is to refer circumstance and surrounding to the consciousness, as central and determinative force, and to provide that this light by which we see, this all-shaping, all-constructing genius of life within us, maintain itself at its best.

Now, since this inherent creative function of thought must needs make the outward world in some form confess its sway, in what can its dignity consist in a state of society where there are no practical materials to which it can be applied? *Plainly, in concentrating on itself, and in affirming itself to be the sole reality.* In other words, the ascetic maintains self-respect, through annihilating the senses, or the perception of them, *by his mental effort.* He keeps thought sovereign by proving its sufficiency for itself, where *outward* material is wanting. Yet as actual details, elements, and forces, however strenuously denied, are inevitable, as is also the need of some kind of mastery over them, so their reactions on such unbalanced idealism turned it into a claim to the possession of their secret springs *through concentration of thought alone.* Thaumaturgy, the preternatural gift of wonder-working with elements and forms, has simply meant *that thought shall master things,* if not through knowledge of their practical uses, then through its own inherent *right* to master them. Thought, it says, is primal, creative: things are its shadow, its echo, its plastic material, and should obey.

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In thaumaturgy.

This is the divine element that shines through the fantastic disciplines of Hindu Yogis and Christian pillar saints; behind the absurdity, the spiritual pride, the insanity even, of superstition, that are of course no less evident. The ascetic has chosen his realm, and to his own thought he is master of it. Wherever he concentrates his thought, there, for himself and to his own consciousness, he shall control phenomena. Thinking devoutly on the sun, it shall yield him universal sight; on the pole-star, it shall concede him all star powers. Carry mind to the bottom of the throat, and hunger shall cease; to the space between his eyebrows, and external contact is reduced to a minimum. Let it desire freedom from the body, and he shall be free of all elements and forms. *Mind*, in concentration and essence, is here the sovereign power. Now if here instead of mind, you put the word *.ith*, you have the *Hebrew* claim of miraculous power; whether to change stones into bread, or water into wine.

So with the fate that tied souls to transmigration. Was it not the consequence of interested motives; of *thought*, wandering from its centre, fettered to things? "Think on freedom then, on the life beyond self," says the ascetic, "and the bonds are broken, the very wheel of birth and fate and form is dissolved." Do we smile at the ignorance? That we may easily enough do. But there is more than we have noted, behind it. There is intuition of the rights of thought, of will, of soul. It is the childhood of a gigantic energy; the germ of liberty and progress; none the less so because crude and ignorant, and for ages not finding conditions of higher development. And the materialism that can only ridicule it has left out of its own phil-

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osophy the element that philosophy can least afford to spare.

Asceticism has its unheroic side, not peculiar to the Hindu. The Vedânta text has been virtually the burden of world-weariness and listlessness in all times. "What relish for enjoyment in this unsound body, assailed by desire and passion, avarice and illusion, sorrow and fear, absence from the loved, presence of the hated, disease, leanness, old age, and death."[1] Or hear the old Hebrew preacher: "The thoughts of mortal man are miserable, and his devices uncertain: for the earthly body weigheth down the soul." How large a proportion of Christian preaching, from first to last, has whined over the vanity of the world and the flesh! The practical genius of the West, its opportunity of culture and construction, at last makes this Christian other-worldliness quite intolerable; though there are still creeds that, like the old Egyptian monks, are watering its dry sticks in the sand. Asceticism.

But we are to remember that a religion that should dare to claim the state, market, scientific progress, and social reform, as free fields of natural human development, could not possibly have existed till this present time of secular interests and largest ethnic intercourse. The Oriental world had neither gift nor place for this hope in visible things. From India to Palestine, from the Veda to the Gospels, why should they *not* have lacked substance, to the watching soul, like a vapor that was soon to pass away? Social aspiration and moral enterprise could not find play, even "on midnight's sky of rain to paint a golden

[1] See also *Vâjnav.*, III. 8, 106. "He who seeks substance in human life, which is pithless as the Kadali stem, and hollow as a bubble, is without reason."

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morrow." And as the Hebrew Christ fastened his hope on a speedy "coming of the end," so the Hindu saint put his "golden morrow" into that Absolute Life in which all worlds should sink like a dream. And to reach that Life, what absolute surrender his disciplines made of mind and body and will to an ideal good! Asceticism was, there at least, a brave and believing religion.

Germs of Indo-European thought.

This faith in the rights of mind over matter, which in its lower forms becomes asceticism and magic, is the germ of that intellectual grasp and subtlety which has lifted the Indo-European race above the rest of mankind in what depends on the brain alone. Hindu speculation holds not only germs, but even types, and in many respects very noble ones, of the deepest philosophical systems of the West. It has been said, doubtless in this sense, to have "exhausted all the forms which other times and peoples appropriate severally to themselves."[1] Liberty of thought was, for Hindu purposes, perfect, in the sacerdotal class in India.[2] The contentions of the schools afford ample proof of this. There was nothing to limit their speculative genius. They believed the Infinite ever accessible to the seeker; and the traditions and holy books were but helps on the way, to be set aside for a nobler goal.

Scope of Hindu systems.

So in this teeming brain, haunted by a sense of the eternal and unseen, there rose an earlier, or perhaps we should say rather an Oriental, Platonism, Stoicism, Mysticism, Cynicism, Pietism. Forms of thought and faith kindred to these Western systems have been fermenting in the Hindu

[1] Wagner, *Allgemeine Mythol.*, p. 88.

[2] See *Muir*, III. 57.

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mind from the times of the later Rig Veda hymns down to the present day. Its Brahma holds in solution, *more or less vaguely defined*, the Orphic hymn and the Eleatic philosophy. Here, in Eastern form indeed, and without Hellenic energy of will, is the mystical Orphic "Zeus, first, midst, and last; Zeus, element and ruler; Zeus, essence and father; Zeus, one and all." Here the "Kosmos" of Xenophanes, "that sees, hears, and thinks;" his "all-ruling, spheric Unity of Mind, incomprehensible, without beginning, end, or change;" and the "Ens unum" of Parmenides, whereinto all differences dissolved. Here the Anaxagorean "Noûs," or Mind, "ruler of all." Here negation of the manifold; Heraclitean sense of universal flux; Zenonic dialectics, proving that there could be no substantial being in this perpetual evanescence. Here the Western Cynic is foreshadowed in the Eastern Gymnosophist.[1] Here Philo's Logos (ἐνδίαθετος καὶ προφορικὸς), essential and manifest, embracing all. Here Seneca's "All, one only, and deity."[2] Here Marcus Aurelius's "One God, one substance, one law, one common reason, and one truth."[3] Here the "ecstasy" of Plotinus; here Persian Sufism, mystic Jelalleddin and Sadi; here Berkeley's idealism, and Malebranche's vision of "all in God." Here, without its scientific basis or its intense practical vitality, Goethe's sense of a universal cosmic Soul.

And here Hegel's identity of Thought and Being, of subject and object. The Vedânta must have influenced Plotinus: it anticipates Spinoza. The Sânkhya foreshadows at once the skeptics, the posi-

[1] On this point see Grote's *Plato*, ch. xxviii.
[2] *Epistles*, 92.
[3] *Meditations*, VII. 9.

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tivists, the rationalists, the quietists, of later times. An earlier Kantian criticism, as elaborate too in its way, denies the certitude of the understanding, yet holds fast to the rock of moral sanctions. An earlier Fichtean intuition affirms selfishness to be the false and unreal, and pursues the liberty of spiritual obedien as "the blessed life." All these are of course in forms peculiar to Hindu genius.

Here also is the substance of all great philosophies of evil, — holding that it is the condition of finiteness, or comes of things taken in fragments, seen in part; that the world must not be conceived apart from God, if we would know it as it is.

And here are unmistakable forms of spiritual courage and trust, and all-controlling aspirations to the highest thought, as the soul's native place; to absolute good, as rounding the universe and leaving out no life that is or can be; aspirations which foreshadow Christian ideals of the divine, and yield, as do the best of these also, hints of a purer worship yet to come, that shall supplant defects which are constantly characteristic of Christian thought; and especially that imperfect sense of the essential unity of all life, and that lack of intellectual liberty which must ever result from all exclusive claims of personal or historical authority over the religious nature of man.

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II.

SÂNKHYA.

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SÂNKHYA.

OUR sketch of Religious Philosophy thus far, while illustrative of the general features of Hindu thought, has represented in the main what is called the Vedânta or Orthodox school of belief. This is founded on the Vedas, as well as most congenial with the national mind. Yet we have already seen that it was capable of emancipating itself from idolatry of scripture, and affirming the intimacy of man with God through his own essential nature. We have now to examine a different path to the affirmation of spiritual being and sovereignty; one in which these elements of freedom are still more prominent, the Sânkhya system of Kapila.

Kapila and the Sânkhya.

Little is known of Kapila; whose name, a synonym of Fire, hovers, like the names of other founders of Hindu schools, between mythology and history. He is held by some to have been an incarnation of Agni; by others, of Vishnu. The origin of his system cannot be definitely assigned to any special date. More important than any such historical determination is the fact that its persistence and productivity show it to be a natural and spontaneous growth of the Aryan mind.

Like all other systems of Oriental philosophy, it is

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comprised in a series of aphorisms, or *Sutras*, adapted for retention in the memory, and as texts for instruction. And these aphorisms, though already carefully studied and expounded by scholars like Colebrooke, Wilson, Weber, Müller, and Ballantyne, are still much obscured by an exceedingly compact and elliptical style, and by the difficulty of translating and even of comprehending modes of thought and speech peculiar to the Oriental mind.[1]

The earnestness with which Oriental studies are now pursued, both in Europe and the East, justify the hope that we shall soon possess ample data for appreciating the vast store of philosophical germs and developments contained in the six great Hindu systems, or *darśanas*, of which the Sânkhya is the most practical, scientific, and consequent, and, as some think, the oldest.[2] It is for these reasons, as well as from its apparent attitude as the opposite pole to the religious philosophy of the Vedânta, that I have selected it from among these different schools for special presentment, according to my apprehension of its meaning.

Unity of aim in Hindu philosophy.

Nothing we know of the whole body of Hindu philosophy is more impressive than the unity of its aim. Covering the whole field of speculative thought, seeking to unfold the mystery of the universe from every point of view, these schools

[1] The purpose of the present work is satisfied by presenting such general idea of the substance of the Sânkhya as can be derived from the results of these labors; and especially from the translation and commentary of Dr. Ballantyne in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, printed at Calcutta in 1862–65. Of great value also for the comprehension of these Sutras is the *Sânkhya Kârikâ*, (seventy *Memorial Sentences*, definitive of the system), which has been translated with commentaries, native and other, by Professor Wilson. *Sutra* is probably from siv, to *sew*, and refers to the string with which the leaves containing the aphorisms are bound together.

[2] Weber, *Vorles.* p. 212; Thomson's *Bhag. Gitâ*, *Introd.*, ch. iii. The *darśanas* are the two Sânkhyas, the two Mimânsâs, the Nyâya, and the Vaiśeshika.

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are yet penetrated by one and the same motive, — to reach *mukti*, or *moksha*, deliverance from bonds. They are tributes of the intellect to demands of the moral and spiritual being. They are at once, on the one hand, an involuntary confession of the heavy conditions imposed on human existence by the absence of social science, and practical and political liberty, as well as by manifold forms of moral weakness and enslavement to desire, growing out of constitutional and climatic disadvantages; and, on the other, in decisive reaction upon these bonds, asserting full capacity to ascend into a sphere of freedom, reality, and true vision.

All these schools are possessed by the sense of *moral sequence*, of the inevitable fruitage of every action after its own kind, embodied in their conception of *karma*. On this proceeds the belief, also common to them all, in *transmigration*, or the "bonds of birth;" and in the *spiritual body*, which attends the soul, as the ultimation of its past life, and determines the new form it is to assume at death. And to escape that bondage to renewed births, by *transcending* the power of actions to necessitate them, was a grand common purpose of all Hindu systems.

Kapila's first aphorism, "The end of man is the complete cessation of the threefold pain," has a negative aspect, impressed on it by intense consciousness of the force of human limitations, which does little justice to the serenity and joy of his unfolding process of emancipation, and to the positive assurance of good that beckons him onward like a sun in the heavens of thought. Beyond all endeavors at rejection, beyond the ceaseless and radical "nay, nay," with which it met all definite

Negation and affirmation.

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forms of life or action that claimed to satisfy its ideal of freedom, there was a clearly positive faith, a definite and unswerving aim. And Kapila's *negation* does not essentially differ from the mystical *promise* of the Vedânta, which emphasizes the "enjoyment of Brahma" as the end of man.

Emancipation of the spiritual essence is the all-embracing inspiration of the Hindu Word, whether the *emphasis* be placed on the process or the fulfilment. Of all its forms of speculation, this moral aspiration, this ascent from pain to peace, from darkness to light, from bonds to liberty, as the one imperative and the one practicable thing, is the vital substance. This is the "life more than meat" of Hindu faith. This common purpose is, in fact, the form under which the grand instinct of unity, which we have found to be characteristic of the race, made itself master of their philosophical capacities.

The other systems.

The *Nyâya* of Gotama was a method of Logic; yet it aimed at no less than to discover whatsoever could be known, and how to attain the assurance of reality. Röer characterizes its idea of God as coming "nearest to the Christian conception of an Infinite and Personal Spirit." However this may be, it pursues all objects of thought; and with such fulness and definiteness in its forms of cognition as to "allow a place for the treatment of every modern science;" and this purely in order to the "deliverance of man from evil."[1] The *Vaiśeshika* of Kanâda is a similar search for universal certitude, through an exhaustive analysis of categories in many respects more

[1] See the careful analysis of Hindu Systems by Müller, in *Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, VI. pp. 1–34 and 219–242, and VII. pp. 287–313; Madhusadana's *Review of Hindu Literature* in Weber's *Indische Studien*, I. 1–12; Duncker's *Geschichte d. Alterthums*, II. 163–173.

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searching and complete than those of Aristotle; and not without many striking divinations of physical laws and phenomena, — such as an atomic system, the perception of four primary elements, and of a finer ether as vehicle of sound.[1] But this also was a baptism of the whole field of human faculty and resource to the same purpose of spiritual emancipation. Kanâda opens his Sutras with the words: "Let us unfold the way of duty" (*dharma*). "Duty is that which leads to wisdom and the highest good."[2] To the same end the Vedânta, or speculative portion of the *Mimânsâ*, expounds the meaning of revelation and the unity of the human soul with the divine. The *Yoga* of *Patanjali* describes the disciplines by which that union is to be achieved. Finally, the *Karma-Yoga* of the Bhagavadgitâ resumes the substance of all systems in philosophical synthesis, and crowns them with a poetic vision and a moral enthusiasm, that seem the triumphal song of deliverance by Thought. Such the earnestness of this old persistent study of the laws and processes of mind.[3]

[1] Röer's *Transl. of the Vaiśeshika Philos. in Zeitschr. d. D. M. G.*, XXI. XXII.

[2] Or, "which through exaltation leads to emancipation" (Ballantyne). — Banerjea (*Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*) pronounces *dharma* to be only "class (or caste) duty." But can any word, used as the generic expression of obligation, the synonym of *ought*, and this in all systems and relations, mean nothing else than the performance of a given set of observances? The same word is used by Buddhists, who reject caste, to denote their *moral* law. It is used wherever we should use the word *ought*. But Mr. Banerjea thinks also (p. 280) that all the schools are atheistic, because they are more or less pantheistic (*sic*), and because they do not teach "a Creator, separate from the world" (*Pref.*, ix.). And his true sage, the Christian Satyakama, is as credulous about Bible miracles and mysteries as the philosophers he is refuting are towards the Vedic ones. "Duty," in Mr. Banerjea's philosophy, "can only receive sanction from the will of a personal God." If this only means that the principle of right doing implies intelligence as the root of being, and fountain of law, it is of course admitted. But when, in illustration of the real meaning, we are told that "all idea of duty is repudiated in the Vedânta, because the human soul and deity are there identical" (p. 83), we begin to comprehend how very much this author's notions of a 'personal God" have unfitted him to apprehend mystical piety and the unity of being with its manifestations.

[3] The subtleties of Hindu dialectics turn upon formulas and words, and are probably

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"This philosophy," says Gaudapâda, in his commentary on the Sânkhya Kârikâ, "was imparted to Kapila as a boat for crossing the ocean of ignorance in which the world was immersed." "Revelation," says the Kârikâ itself, "is ineffectual; for it is defective in some respects and excessive in others. To know how to discriminate perceptible principles from the One that cannot be perceived, and from the thinking soul, is better."[1]

Rationalism of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya, therefore, is rationalistic. It is careful to define the principles of a true dialectic for the discovery of truth. And its grounds of proof are three: perception, inference, and right affirmation, which it further designates as a form of *Sruti*, or "revelation."[2] This last is declared by the commentators to mean the Vedas; but both Kapila and the Kârikâ mention it last in order of importance. "The Sânkhya," says Röer,[3] "was frequently in opposition to the doctrine of the Vedas, and sometimes openly declared so. Although it referred to them, it did so only when they accorded with its own doctrines; and it rejected their authority in case of discrepancy."

Kapila, *after a Hindu way*, was a positivist. He did not trouble his mind with seeking a first Cause or Source of all. That were but "regressus in infinitum." He did not demand how

The root principle.

carried to a degree of refinement never equalled elsewhere. Yet there is a Spartan, or rather Stoic, simplicity about the plain rude huts (*toles*), where hosts of pupils, generation after generation, have plied these mental gymnastics under countless masters of the great systems of philosophy, which profoundly impresses the European philosopher. Not less striking is the rule of these dialectics that every one shall present the view of his opponent, and exhaust all that can be said in its behalf, before refuting it and maintaining his own. E. B. Cowell in *Proceedings of Bengal Society*, June, 1867.

[1] *Sânkhya Kârikâ*, II. [2] *Kârikâ*, V. [3] *Introd. to Śvetâśvatara.*

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things came to be here, but *what* they are, and *to what end* they are here. He took the realities he felt and saw, referred them to certain root principles as primary and substantial, and made these his starting-point for the discriminations which should teach the truth of being.[1] And these primary substances or "roots"[2] he found to be two in number, and essentially distinct; the one representing the *material* of which the complex experience of actual consciousness is shaped; and the other, its constant and inviolable beholder, representing *the ideal essence* for which it all exists, and by virtue of whose higher presence it becomes of value. This latter substance he did not very clearly define, except by contrast with the other: how was it possible to define the ineffable freedom and bliss of that life of which all experience but serves to teach the transcendence? But the point of moment and the path of life was in knowing that such an ideal personality really is and abides; that the world exists and experience is developed, for its sake; and that one can be delivered out of all the perturbations and errors and blind subserviences which he finds in his experience, into its pure freedom, light, and peace.

This, as I understand it, is the substance of Kapila's distinction between Prakriti, or "nature," and Purusha, or "soul." It was at once speculative and moral, it affirmed that each individual's action, passion, perception, had its value in and through its relation to an ideal personality above and beyond it, for whose purposes it was working, and whose purity and freedom were constant and secure.

It has been usual to translate Prakriti by the terms

[1] *Aphorisms of Kapila*, I. 68. [2] Ibid., I. 67.

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"nature" and "matter." But it certainly does not signify either nature or matter, in the senses now given by us to those terms. Prakriti[1] means a primary principle, a self-subsistent original essence; and in this sense "*Mula* (the root) *Prakriti*" is taken by Kapila to represent the substratum of all experience, except Purusha, or *Soul*, which is the other, and the *ideal*, root-principle *for* which it exists. Prakriti "is not crude, visible, or divisible matter," but that "first principle which was taught in Greece also by Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle," and which in fact "has no property of body."[2] It is all-pervading, immutable, one, without cause or end. It enfolds and evolves[2] senses, without *being* sense as distinct from spirit. It contains and evolves *mind* also; and this not in a materialistic sense, as a mere outside *product* of its creative power, — because the great positive principle of Kapila is that, as there *is no production of something out of nothing*, the effect already pre-exists in the cause, and like comes from like only, just as "the act of the sculptor can only produce the manifestation of the image that was already [ideally] in the stone."[3] Mind, therefore, *pre-exists in the essence of Prakriti*, which consequently cannot be mere "matter" as distinct from mind. But Prakriti evolves both senses and mind, *only* through the presence and purpose of "*Soul*," which again must not be confounded with mind, as thus evolved in a secondary, instrumental, and sense-entangled form.

Superiority of mind even in Prakriti.

[1] From pra, *before*, and kri, *to make* (procreo), indicating pre-existent, productive force.

[2] Wilson's *Kârikâ*, p. 82.

[3] Vijnâna Bikhshu's commentary on the Sânkhya. *Aphorisms*, I. 78, 120.

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Prakriti is also the equipoise, or essential substratum, of the three *gunas* [or qualities] of "goodness, foulness [or rather, appetence], and darkness," — elements which in a mixed, consorted, and confused manner, are, as bonds (guna), involved in all experience, moral and intellectual; but which must pass away, with all their blind gravitations, in the serene light and liberty of "Soul." These *gunas* certainly cannot have been regarded as merely physical, however related to the organs of sense, and the bodily investment of mind. They correspond, probably, as nearly as we can express them, to physical and moral temperaments.[1] Thus goodness is described as "enlightening," foulness as "urgent, or passionate," and darkness as "heavy and enveloping."[2] The guna of "goodness" is, it would seem, a temperamental, undiscerning *instinct* for what is right and good. The guna of "foulness" (or appetence) is that perturbation of the passions, that blind headiness of desire, that vehement grasp and cling upon things as if they could not be spared; which blurs the sight, and stains the motive, and enslaves the will. The guna of "darkness" is the gloom of downward gravitation to a sensual and brutish state. These products of Prakriti are said to consort with each other, as resulting, in different degrees and different aspects and directions, from one and the same action.[3] And these are in equipoise and perpetual possibility, in Prakriti, as the three streams are united in the Ganges.[4]

The three qualities.

From this first principle or "primary root," this un-

[1] The Gnostics, in like manner, recognized three kinds of men, the *pneumatical*, or spiritual; the *psychical*, attracted both to sense and spirit; and the *hylical*, or material.

[2] *Kârikâ*, XIII. [3] Ibid., XII.

[4] *Comment. of Gaudapâda on Kârikâ*, XVI.

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changing essence of all things "mutable, discrete, mergent in their causes again,"[1] come what Kapila calls the seven "produced and productive principles." They are called *vikriti* (from *vi*, differently, and *kri*, to make), indicating that they are not external products made of nothing, but modifications rather of the root itself.

The seven principles.

These are (1) "Mahat," the Great one, called also buddhi, or *understanding*, meaning doubtless Mind in its active relations and consequent limitations; whence, (2) "Ahankâra," self-consciousness, or *egoism;* whence, (3) five "subtile rudiments," which are the grounds of our cognition of sound, touch, smell, form, and taste. And these seven powers potentiate for us — or, as Kapila says, "produce" — the five organs of sensation, the five organs of action, and the five gross elements, or lowest form of matter, to which is added "manas," or *mind* as the percipient and sensitive element, that refers them to a single consciousness.[2] These last are "products, but unproductive." And the outward organs of sense are called the *gates* or doors, while the higher internal forces that make these their means of communication — namely, understanding, self-consciousness, and sensibility — are called the *warders*.[3]

The twenty-five.

"He who knows these twenty-five principles," says Kapila, "is liberated, whatever order of [social] life he may have entered."[4]

Further definitions.

Now, of the seven productive principles that flow from Prakriti, Mahat is further defined by its faculties of "virtue, knowledge, and power:"

[1] Aristotle says (*Metaph.*, I. 3), that "there must be a certain permanent *Nature*, or primary matter, from which other entities are produced, and which remains in a state of conservation."

[2] *Kârikâ*. Also, *Aphorisms*, I. 61; II. 17, 18.

[3] *Kârikâ*, XXXV.

[4] Gaudapâda on *Kâr.*, I.

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virtue (or dharma) being the fulfilment of the duties of humanity, and power being the "subjugation of nature."[1] Ahankâra is egoism, or consciousness, considered as involving the pride (abhimâna) that, for Hindu conscience, always vitiates the feeling of individuality; and the "self-sufficiency that says there is no other supreme but me."[2] Both "understanding" and "egoism" are of course imperfect: the one as affected by mental incompetency, error, and manifold circumstance; the other as the illusion of self-complacency. And their use is in subserving the spiritual ideal, by pointing to somewhat beyond, and in contrast with themselves. What Kapila meant by the "subtile rudiments" is not so easy to determine, — perhaps some finer elementary substance, from which the grosser organs were supposed to emanate; but, more probably, the subjective, intelligent ground involved in sensation; the perceptivity required for the act of receiving outward impressions; and this taken as generator of the special senses themselves, — one subtile form for each sense.

Precedence of intelligence to matter.

Concerning all this, we must observe that, as is usual with Hindu thinking, so here, intelligence generates gross matter, not the reverse; and if Prakriti, the root of these seven intelligent principles, is called "unconscious," this is meant in no absolute sense, and in none that invalidates the precedence of intelligence; since, however unconscious, it is still active; and active, moreover, in serving a higher intelligence still; "fulfilling the purposes of soul, spontaneously and by an innate property; its instruments performing their functions by mutual in-

[1] Gaudapâda on *Kâr.*, XXIII.
[2] Vâchespati's Comment. on *Kâr.*, XXIV.; *Aph.*, II. 16.

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vitation, the soul's purpose being the motive."[1] "For this alone does Prakriti act, to fulfil the soul's desire."[2]

Among the errors about the nature of soul which constitute bondage, that of confounding it with matter,[3] or any of the products of Prakriti, is pronounced by all Sânkhyan authorities to be the most radical. "Soul," says Kapila, "is something other than body; since what is combined, and so discerptible, is for the sake of some other that is indiscerptible." "Soul is not material, because it is the experiencer; and because of its superintendence over nature."[4]

Soul distinct and sovereign.

Further: the principle of intelligent perceptive power (mahat) is capable of discriminating between Purusha and Prakriti;[5] and in so doing recognizes soul as superior to both "nature" and itself, in consequence of its being *intelligence* in a higher sense than itself. For soul, according to Kapila, must not be confounded with mind as such;[6] having a higher form of knowledge; pure, independent, undisturbed vision. "Soul is the seer, the spectator, bystander."[7] Have we not here a hint of *intuition*, in its distinction from *opinion;* of the higher reason in contrast with the limits of the understanding?

Positivism in the Sânkhya.

I have said that Kapila, after a Hindu way, was a positivist. But he certainly was not a materialist. The Sânkhya has plainly in many respects a transcendental method and faith.

But what is the meaning of that "spontaneity and innate property" of unconscious Prakriti, that independent force by which it acts, even in "service of

[1] *Kârikâ*, XXXI.
[2] Ibid., XLII.; *Aph.*, II. 36, 37.
[3] Wilson's *Comment. on Kâr.*, XLV.
[4] *Aphorisms*, I. 139, 142, 143.
[5] *Kârikâ*, XXXVII.
[6] *Aph.*, I. 129, 130.
[7] *Aph.*, II. 29; *Kârikâ*, XIX.

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soul"? Have we not here a germ of positive science? Is it any thing else than an instinctive presentiment of natural law, and of the development of the world thereby? And is not the remanding of soul to the position of a "witness and seer," not interfering with those innate properties of spontaneous development, an imperfect recognition of the invariability of natural law, and its independence of all external volition or arbitrary intervention? I cannot find a better explanation than this of his meaning, when, as if fascinated by the self-adequacy of nature, he refers the orderly processes of experience to modifications of an active but unconscious principle. Yet the unconsciousness of Prakriti is, as we have just seen, only relative to itself as process, as mode, or as law. It stands in the closest relation to conscious *intelligence*, or soul, which, if not its cause, is allowed to be the motive from which it acts and the force which "superintends" it.[1] These are hints that soul, in the Sânkhya, really means spirit guiding the course of nature, though Kapila does not seem to have followed them out. So the strictest modern positivist must recognize in natural law that unity, beauty, order, mystery, which are in fact representative of whatever intelligence holds most worthy of itself.

What does Kapila mean here by "soul" and its "desire"? *How* does Prakriti point to that for whose service it exists? In other words, how does the actual enforce faith in the ideal? Here is the compact answer to the last questions: —

"Since sensible objects are for use of another [than themselves]; since the opposite of that which has the three qualities must exist; since there must be superintendence; since there must

[1] *Kârikâ*, XVII.; *Aphorisms*, I. 142.

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be one to enjoy; and since there is a drawing to abstraction, — that is, since every one desires release, — *therefore* [know we that] *Soul is.*"[1]

What is soul?

What then *is* Soul? It is affirmed to be free from all qualities which produce the imperfections of experience, — free, therefore, from their activity or pursuit of special objects, which in experience produces dependence, bondage, loss, and grief. As steadfast, imperturbable, perfectly self-subsistent, it must be related to the world of imperfect conditions as a witness and a bystander only, not a participant in these defects.

In other words, — as we should say, and as the Hindu, in his fashion, says here, I think, quite clearly, — an *ideal capability* stands fast in us, as the real substance of ourselves, untouched by the errors and stains of life, unabated by its discouragements, with serenity beholding them, as it were, in their real outwardness to its own essence.

Soul not really bound.

Yet this ideal essence, like the Hellenic-Hebrew "Wisdom," though "remaining in itself, makes all things new." It is constantly united with Prakriti in the individual consciousness, and so *appears* to share in its infirmities, to be bound in all the fetters of experience. But the appearance is illusory. The soul is not really bound. In all this confused activity, this unsatisfactory doing, it is "the qualities" that are active, while the "stranger" [soul] but *appears* the agent.[2] It is like our confounding fire and iron in a heated bar, or sun and water in reflections from a stream; like the color of glass when a rose is near it. It is illusion: "verbal; resides in the mind, not in the soul itself."[3] The soul

[1] *Kârikâ*, XVII. [2] Ibid., XX. [3] *Aph.*, I. 58.

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cannot be bound. "Verily not any soul is bound, or released, or transmigrates; but nature (Prakriti) alone is so, in relation to the variety of beings."[1] In other words, the bondage men feel is not essential bondage;[2] and thoroughly to know this by faith in the soul as absolute, imperishable, and free,[3] is liberation. Plotinus, also, asserts the soul to be an essence which miseries and changes cannot touch; that these reach only to the shadow of it, not the substance; that its bliss is in pure seeing, free of the blindness of material desires and pursuits. How the soul comes to be united with "nature," or the defects of experience, Kapila does not ask. He accepts the fact. Whence comes our ideal vision, is not the first, nor the main question, nor soluble for the scientific understanding at any time. *For what end* it is always with us, is the point of moment. And Kapila's answer is that, practically, "union is for the sake of liberation." Till true discrimination is attained, till the validity and independence of this higher personality is appreciated, there remains the illusion which is bondage and pain. The lame and the blind are journeying, and agree to help each other: the blind carries the lame on his shoulders, and the journey is accomplished, since the one can walk and the other show the way. So "soul" conjoined with "nature," if it cannot move, can see; and "nature," if it cannot see, can advance under guidance. Thus liberation is effected, and the journey ends.[4] The Sânkhya loves to describe the essential good-will that resides in the process, arduous as it is; the real harmony of ideal and actual, the friendly purpose that animates this necessary illusion and

[1] *Kârikâ*, LXII.; *Aph.*, I. 160, 162.
[2] *Aph.*, I. 12, 15, 19.
[3] *Aph.*, I. 7.
[4] *Kârikâ*, XXI.

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defect; the effort, as it were, of Prakriti herself to deliver man from his pain. That man shall know and discern her truth, — not that she hold him bound in ignorance, — is her purport. Unconscious nature lives and loves, in *his* desire. "As people engage in acts to relieve desires, so nature to liberate soul; generous, seeking no benefit, nature accomplishes the wish of ungrateful Soul."[1] Her evolution goes on "for deliverance of each soul:" it is "done for another's sake as for self."[2] Here is unity of spirit plucked even from the abysses of speculative analysis, of essential distinction! "Nothing," says Gaudapâda, "is, in my opinion, more gentle than Prakriti: once aware of having been seen, she does not expose herself again to the gaze of soul."[3] How delicate and genial is this sense of illusion, which makes error vanish from the eyes of truth, as one who knows she should not be seen!

Similar ideas are found in the Gnostic systems. And the fundamental principle of both philosophies is the same. "Bondage is from misconception."[4] It consists in errors about the nature of soul. If this seems to ignore the moral element, we have seen that the intellectual and the moral are closely associated in the old philosophies of the Aryan race; that "knowledge" involves entering into the nature of what is known, becoming one with the ideal, through abandonment of all selfish and sensual interests.

Moral relations of this idea.

All Oriental wisdom assumes to a greater or less degree the truth of the Platonic maxim, that to know virtue is to love it, and that whoso *really sees* vices *must* shun them. That moral evil

[1] *Kârikâ*, LVIII. LX.
[2] Ibid., LVI.
[3] Ibid., LXI.
[4] *Aph.*, III. 24.

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is from misconception, and is to be cured by the pure vision of truth, is at least a principle tending to purify the conscience, and urge it to the pursuit of the real, to surrender of the shadow and the surface to win the substance of virtue. In the absence of that light which science lends to the conscience, the moral effect of this absolute faith in right knowing must have been relatively greater than that of distinctively intellectual motives at the present day.

Ethical value of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya is philosophy rather than ethics; and its aphorisms do not enter definitely into the special disciplines by which pure "soul" was to be reached. Yet the very substance of its "discrimination" is the preference of higher to lower principles; of the eternal to the transient; of ideal personality to self-centred individuality; of spirit to sense; of duty to desire. And the sum of those "defects of the understanding" which cause "delay of liberation" is distinctly defined to be "acquiescence;"[1] the self-complacency that causes it to stop short of that perfect sacrifice by which truth is fully known.

Of the forms of such "acquiescence," four are *internal*. The first relates to *nature*, and consists in merely recognizing principles *as* of nature, without going further; the second, to *means*, a mere dependance on observance; the third, to *time*, a mere waiting, as if liberation would come in good season; the fourth, to *luck*, expecting it to turn up by chance. The other, or *external*, kinds of acquiescence, are forms of abstinence from objects, merely because of the trouble and anxiety they bring.[2]

The practical philosophy of the Sânkhya, as far as

[1] *Kârikâ*, I [2] Gaudapâda on *Kâr.*, L.

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it can be seen in the Aphorisms, in fact, reminds us of the manly precepts of the later Stoic and the breadth of the Eclectic schools.

"Not in a perturbed mind does wisdom spring."

"The lotus is according to the soil it grows in."

"Success is slow; and not even, though instruction be heard, is the end gained without reflection."

"Not by enjoyment is desire appeased."

"Go not, of thine own will, near to one driven by strong desire."

"He who is without hopes is happy."

"Though one devote himself to many teachers, he must take the essence, as the bee from flowers."[1]

Limits of self-abnegation.

How far the sacrifice must be carried may be learned from the following decisive aphorism of the Kârikâ: —

"Liberation obtained through knowledge of the twenty-five principles teaches the one only knowledge, — that neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist."[2]

Such is Wilson's translation, which doubtless a little periphrasis would make more intelligible to the Teutonic mind.

How are we to understand such a statement as this? If it were the language of sentiment, instead of being, as it is, a positive aphorism of philosophy, it might find its equivalents in the mystical piety of every age. That it should here mean either nihilism, or the "desire of annihilation," is plainly impossible. We have seen that even the Vedânta, in resolving all existence into illusion, except the life of the soul in the absolute and eternal, taught no such purpose of self-destruction. Can we then imagine this to be, in any sense, compatible with the intense realism of Kapila, who firmly insists not only that nature is a positive principle and

[1] *Aph.*, IV. [2] *Kârikâ*, LXIV.

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entity,[1] but that soul is not one, but many; and that each of these souls is a unit, or monad, real and imperishable?[2] The whole aim of the Sânkhya is liberation "*for the sake of this*," which is the *proper personality*, and nowise to be lost, nor merged, nor marred. Kapila indeed takes special pains to declare that "the soul's aim is *not* annihilation."[3] And the commentators on the verse above quoted explain it to mean that the one true wisdom is "difference from egotism," and "exemption from being the seat of pain;" *i.e.*, from the errors and bonds of the understanding in its consciousness of agency.[4] "By these expressions, — 'neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist,' — we are not to understand negation of soul. This would be direct contradiction to the Sânkhya categories. It is intended merely as negation of the soul's having any active participation, individual interest, or property, in human pains and human feelings. The verse does not amount, therefore, as Cousin has supposed, to "le nihilisme absolu, dernier fruit du skepticisme."[5]

It should seem that the term "*human*," in Wilson's explanation, as indicating what is to be dismissed from the life in liberation, covers too large a ground; since the soul, as Kapila conceives it, is properly the very *essence* of our humanity, and all human experience is for its sake.[6]

Yet, inasmuch as in Hindu thought knowledge of soul can be attained only by *becoming* soul, it would follow that the interests of the body, Disparagement of the outward.

[1] *Aph.*, I. 79; VI. 53.
[2] *Aph.*, I. 144, 149–151. "As the elements are real so is the soul real." *Yâjnav.*, III. 149.
[3] *Aph.*, I. 47.
[4] *Chandrikâ*, quoted by Wilson, p. 180.
[5] Wilson, p. 181.
[6] *Aph.*, II. 46.

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and properly the body itself, must pass away before liberation, in the pure and perfect sense, can be achieved. Disparagement of man's physical and practical relations is of course the weak point in this as in all Oriental philosophy. Kapila's insistence on the "isolation" of soul, and its distinction from "nature," involves a constant endeavor to separate the two in the interest of the former, which even his realistic view of "nature," and his perception of her essential sympathy with the "aim of soul," cannot counteract. Thus while he affirms that liberation is possible in this life, and without the dissolution of the body, he is careful to explain that, when this is attained, soul remains invested with body only as the potter's wheel continues to whirl, after the potter has left it, by the impetus previously given.[1] The aspiration after purely spiritual existence in the present life has produced similar disparagement of outward relations in Christianity also, from the New Testament down to the renaissance-epoch in modern Europe, and even till the recent growth of physical science. Its asceticism could only be counterbalanced by social interests and practical aims; and these have but followed up the "necessary discriminations" insisted on by the Kapilas and other rationalists of old, with a higher synthesis of soul and sense.

Linga, or spiritual body.

But, liberation *not* being accomplished in this life, body was, according to the Sânkhya, *not* escaped at death. It accompanied the soul still, in its subtile form, the *linga Śarira*,[2] or "spiritual body," which consisted of all those principles and rudimental elements which flow from Prak-

[1] *Kârikâ*, LXVII.

[2] *Linga* signifies a *characteristic*, or *mark*. *Śarira* is *the body*.

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riti, with the exception of the enveloping gross organs and bodily frame; these, and only these, perishing at death. The *linga*, with all its component parts, — understanding, egoism, and the subtile organs that serve them, — is subject to transmigration, requires the support of a special vehicle or body, and ceases only with the process of liberation, and the full realization of soul.[1]

Here Kapila stops. He does not tell us what he holds this life of realized soul to be, save in its difference from all present experiences through the understanding, from all our self-conscious feeling and action. Not his to describe the end, but to state the distinctions that condition it, and to hint the way to it. But the implication seems to be, that with the fulfilment of man's highest ideal comes the ineffable reality, which we can neither understand nor conceive; but to which all that we see, and know, and feel, and dream ourselves the doers and possessors of, is but the imperfect and transient means; the deaf, dumb, and blind servant of a secret which its finiteness helps, by very contrast, to reveal. Kapila's limit.

The substance is this. *There is a reality*, abiding eternally, to know which is life, and before which all other intelligence, as Paul says of "tongues and prophecies and knowledge," shall "vanish away." And as the apostle's reason for the evanescence of these is that "we know in part, and prophesy in part, and when that which is perfect is come that which is in part must be done away," Kapila would probably ask why the *specially Christian faith, hope, and love*, which Paul thought sure to His affirmation.

[1] The *Bhagav. Gitâ* says that, "when spirit abandons a body, it migrates, taking with it its senses, as the wind wafts along with itself the perfume of the flowers."

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abide when knowledge shall have been proved a vain thing, must not also, as being in like wise imperfect and partial, pass away when that which is perfect is come. And shall we not hear Kapila and Socrates as well as Jesus and Paul? Are ideals of pure knowledge essentially less adequate than ideals of faith and love, if these disparage knowledge? Will not the future insist on the necessity of independent seeing, in order to right believing and true helping, — on the unity of science and love?

The Aphorisms.

For fuller understanding of this interesting system, let us review its leading characteristics, with special illustration from the aphorisms ascribed to Kapila himself.

Differences of Vedânta and Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya proves the capacity of Hindu genius for a very different form of thought from that which we have been tracing through the mystical unities of the Vedânta. There is no passive receptivity of mind, no dissolving of distinctions in the infinite as the only real. Precisely the opposite. The word Sânkhya refers us to *numbers* as definite entities: it means to distinguish, to weigh, to judge. "Learn to discriminate, and be free," was the precept of this philosophy; and that it was needed in Indian thought has already become sufficiently plain.

Both Vedânta and Sânkhya aim at spiritual emancipation. But the one assumes absolute unity, and seeks freedom by solving all distinctions therein; the other assumes essential distinction, as between "soul" and blind "natural" forces, and seeks freedom by dissolving the bondage which consists in confounding them.

The Vedânta affirms all spirit to be absolutely one:

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the Sânkhya recognizes the diversity of persons as real. So that while the Vedantist escapes bondage when he sees himself to be one with Brahma, the Sânkhyan is free when he knows himself as really separate from all blind and confused conceptions, all crude, intractable material in the natural order of experience. "To know that one was *not* bound when one seemed to be so, — this," says Kapila, "is liberation." So the Vedantist could say, but hardly in the interest of individual being. For him the real soul was free, in that its substance was not in the individual self, but in God. For the other it was free, in that it was itself substance, *as* individual, which bondage could not really touch. The Nyâya, also, affirms individual souls to be real, eternal, and even infinite.[1]

For the Vedantist, bondage was unreal, because the *ego* that was bound and the phenomenal world which bound it were alike void of essential life.

For the Sânkhyan, bondage was unreal, because while the world that *seemed* to bind it was granted real, the true *ego*, also real, for ever stood beyond its power. Definite forms of existence were mâyâ (illusion) for the one: bondage itself, bondage alone, was mâyâ for the other.

The Sânkhya is analytic, as the Vedânta is synthetic. It reacts against the very idea of unity; and, so far as is possible, avoids it; being, in fact, not a system of theology at all, but a system of analytic philosophy in the interest of individual (speculative and moral) freedom. Without denying an ulterior synthesis, it affirms its two primary principles, Purusha (the soul) and Prakriti ("nature"), which again are divis-

[1] Colebrooke's Analysis, *Essays*, I. 268.

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ible; since of souls there is multiplicity, and of Prakriti there is a primal and also a developed, "phenomenal," form.

Meaning of Prakriti.

Prakriti, "rootless (or primary) root," is not, let us once more note, material nature in any absolute sense; since, as developed through contact with "soul," it appears in a series of evolutions, of which the first member is *apprehension*, and the second *self-consciousness*, or self-will, the egoistic element; out of which, as Hindu thought is wont to make mind precedent and body derivative, are generated the subtile organs and gross body of sensation and action.[1] To explain the real meaning of the conception, we have the further fact that Prakriti is also the original equipoise or latent potentiality of three psychological qualities, evolved in man through its union with mind,[2] — the ascending quality (*sattva*, or goodness), allied to essence and light; the impulsive, ungoverned rotating quality (*rajas*, or passion); and last, the downward-tending quality of weight and darkness (*tamas*, or irrationality). Of this triplicity of qualities, which runs through the whole of Hindu thought, and which has formed substantially the basis of psychological conceptions in other races also, Prakriti was the mere potential ground, or indifference, generating them in definite forms, *only through union with soul*, itself unconscious; "energizing spontaneously, not by thought," yet really existing *as* Prakriti, in these qualities, the phenomena of *mind*.

From all which, we can perhaps divine the meaning of the word in this subtle system of analytics. Prakriti cannot be dead matter; nor is it independent mind. It indicates simply, in my judgment, an effort to ex-

[1] *Aph.*, I. 71, 73; II. 16, 18.

[2] *Aph.*, III. 48–50.

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press that mysterious interweaving of unconscious and active powers, which obscures the relation of mind with body, not to Hindu vision only, but to all human insight hitherto attained.

Over against this, Kapila posits essential man, seeking to lift the conception as far as possible above these sources of error, confusion, and consequent bondage, with which man is phenomenally connected, and to affirm his inalienable ideal sovereignty. "Soul (purusha) is;"[1] and it is substantial and valid in every individual soul; not competent merely to liberate itself from this blind Prakriti and its bondage of illusions, but in and of itself vitally and for ever free, the ultimate force "for whose service this exists and energizes." Hence it is seen only when felt as throned serene behind the warfare of life, inviolate; a witness and seer in itself, "neither agent nor patient," though taking the tinge of qualities by reflection merely, so as to appear both the one and the other, just as glass reflects the color of the object near it; and moving the organs "by proximity only," through some subtle authority lying behind contact, and of a higher quality than that; as the loadstone moves the iron, or a king his army through orders and not by engaging in the fight.[2] A grand conception, or divination by pure intellect, *of the authority of mind over circumstance, and of the impossibility of final moral and spiritual failure.* This is to lay a noble basis for psychology and theology in the dignities of personal being; and for that inward union with imperishable principles which lifts it above transiency and loss. It is the affirmation of *ideal personality*, in a very high form.

Meaning of Purusha.

[1] *Aph.*, VI. 1.

[2] *Aph.*, I. 106; II. 29; I. 96.

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Here then the two principles; not absolute duality, since Prakriti is said to generate *for the sake of the soul*, and thus soul alone is declared really and absolutely *to be*. Yet the Sânkhya makes no systematic effort to reduce the two to one, nor even to urge the unity of either with itself. It is too much absorbed in the endeavor to distinguish the proper personality from temporary illusions, overmastering passions, and special solicitudes, and too thoroughly possessed by its glad vision of the soul as divine repose, as free beholding, as pure transcendence. So the substance of its insight is freedom; its watch-word, "the separateness (or detachment) of soul."[1]

Not pure dualism.

So profoundly was the Hindu mind prepossessed by the synthetic tendency, that an analytic process was but natural reaction, sundering the elements, and drawing forth their respective validities. Thus the Sânkhya takes special pains to prove, against Vedantic absorption of the many into the One, that there is a *real multiplicity of souls*.[2] And it explains the Vedic texts which affirm the oneness of soul, as referring simply to the comprehensiveness of "genus."[3]

Rationalism of the Sânkhya.

The Sânkhya is rationalistic, as the Vedânta is pietistic. It is sceptical, as the other is believing. It is active criticism, as the other is unquestioning faith. It appeals to common sense and realistic perception against the unbalanced mysticism that merely absorbed all things into one. It is an effort to escape from this into the true sense of spiritual being, by concentration on perception, inference, testimony, and the exclusion of all causes of false notions.[4]

[1] *Aph.*, V. 65; VI. 1, 70.
[2] Ibid., I. 149–151.
[3] Ibid., I. 154.
[4] Ibid., I. 87, 89 100.

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The Vedânta in its best form recognizes that the highest truth cannot be reached by the study of the Vedas, and that the wise may "throw them by, as one who seeks grains the chaff." Its piety left paths open out of the bibliolatry that beset its schools. Liberties.

But the Sânkhya made a more radical protest; for it starts from postulates of reason, not of faith. The worship of the letter, the authority of a book, must cease. Kapila declares plainly, The Veda is not eternal: it is not supernatural nor superhuman; its meaning does not transcend the common intuition. He who understands the secular meanings of words can understand their sense in the Veda. There is no special bible sense; there is no authority of scriptures apart from their self-evidence and the fruit of their teaching. They do not proceed from a supreme Person (Iśwara); for since one liberated could not desire to make them, and one unliberated could not have power, no such supreme Man or Lord can have been their author. They are *there;* a breath of self-existence; *a fact in other words*, traceable to no special mind. That is all that can be said.[1] Kapila, it is true, on the other hand, did not dispute the Vedas. But he called them "self-evident conveyers of right knowledge, through the patentness of their power to instruct rightly."[2] . In other words, he rested his respect for them on their appeal to his own reason, and judged them by their tendencies. What he found contrary to his intuition and his judgment, he ascribed to such and such a motive, and quietly set it aside.[3] Their central idea of unity, for instance, he disposes Treatment of the Veda.

[1] *Aph.*, V. 40–51.
[2] Röer, *Introd. to Śvetâśvatara Upan.*, p. 36.
[3] *Aph.*, V. 51.

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of thus: "Such texts as, 'all is soul alone,' are there 'for the sake of the undiscriminating,' 'to help the weak to meditation.'"[1] In view of all this, it can hardly be supposed that Kapila allowed absolute authority to the Vedas. Decidedly, criticism of the "holy text" has here begun. Its later development forms a striking feature of the Buddhist and Purânic systems, which, in the main, follow the Sânkhya.[2]

Of ritualism.

"Scriptural rites and forms are but works: they are not the chief end of man."[3]

"Pain to victims must bring pain to the sacrificer of them."[4]

How indeed, with his intense conviction of the freedom of the soul, could Kapila believe that any outward conformities would satisfy its desire? To know itself is its wisdom and its rest. Here is what he says of it:—

Of spiritual liberties.

"Soul is other than body; not material, because overseeing physical nature, and because, while this is the thing experienced, the soul it is that experiences."[5]

"Atoms are not the cause of it, for atoms have neither pleasure nor pain."[6]

"Light does not pertain to the unintelligent, and the soul is essential light."[7]

"Mind, as product of undiscerning activity (Prakriti) and as made of parts, is perishable, but *not soul*."[8] It is an error to mistake even mind, as such, for soul.[9]

"Only soul can be liberated; because only that can be isolated, in which blind, changeful qualities are but reflected, and do not constitute its essence."[10] Simply,

[1] *Aph.*, V. 63, 64.
[2] Wilson's *Essays*.
[3] *Aph.*, I. 82.
[4] Ibid., I. 84.
[5] Ibid., I. 139–142.
[6] Ibid., I. 113.
[7] Ibid., I. 145.
[8] Ibid, I. 136; V. 70–73.
[9] Ibid., I. 129.
[10] Ibid., I. 144.

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as we have seen, a form of expressing that pure independence which this system claims for spiritual substance, or rather for spiritual integrity.

"The soul is solitary, uncompanioned: it is constant freedom, a witness, a seer."[1]

What liberation is.

"Liberation is not through works, which are transient; nor through the worship of the All, which must be mingled with fancies about the world;"[2] "nor through the desire of heaven, for that desire is to be shunned."[3] "It is not the excision of any special qualities; not possessions, nor magic powers; not going away to any world, since soul is immovable, and does not go away; not conjunction with the rank of gods, which is perishable; not absorption of the part into the whole; not destruction of all; not the void,—nor yet joy:"[4] but more and better than all these, to know the difference which separates the undiscerning movement of qualities, or tendencies to goodness, passion, and darkness in the senses and the mind, from free spiritual being, and so "to thirst no more;"[5] "a work not of a moment, but of that complete concentration and devotion, which has many obstacles."[6]

Appeal to reason.

How finely affirmative through all this negation is Kapila's appeal to pure reason to prove that bondage is not essential to the soul;[7] that forever, within man, whether he knows it or not, and lifted above the possibility of subjection to evil, witness and seer, watching and waiting its hour, indefeasible and inviolate, is the principle of purity and freedom![8] "To know the difference, and that one *was not bound*

[1] *Aph.*, V. 65; I. 162; II. 29.
[2] *Aph.*, III. 26, 27.
[3] Ibid., III. 52.
[4] Ibid., V. 74–83.
[5] Ibid., II., Vijnâna Bhikshu's *Introd.*; so *Śvetâśvatara*, III. 19; IV. 7–17.
[6] Ibid., II. 3.
[7] *Aph.*, I. 7, &c.
[8] *Aph.*, I. 162.

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when one seemed to be so,"[1] — is Kapila's idea of "liberation;" and he knew it was not to be reached without paying the price in all that surrender of lower desires on which he insists.

To take all this on the authority of pure Reason; to believe it because it seemed most rational and becoming, and so to stake the issues of life upon it, — is surely an achievement for all ages and religions to respect.

All is for man's ideal life.

For this great work of liberation, Prakriti is but an instrument. She, the really bound, "binds herself seven ways, but becomes liberated in *one* form only," which is "knowledge" of the truth of things.[2] All is thus for the ideal life of man. "The soul is the seer, the organs are its instruments."[3] "Creation is for the soul's sake, from Brahma down to a post; till there be liberation thereof."[4] "Nature serves soul like a born slave;" "creates for its sake, as the cart carries saffron for its master."[5] And "sense" itself becomes "supersensuous" through this necessity for mind as the explanation of its phenomena. "It is a mistake to suppose that sense is identical with that in which it is seated."[6]

Is the Sânkhya atheistic?

That all this inherent sovereignty is ascribed to every individual soul, and the "multiplicity of souls" insisted on, has been thought to involve unbelief in unity of essence *above* this multiplicity of individuals; and hence the division into "Theistic" and "Atheistic" Sânkhya; Kapila being regarded as representative of the latter, and Patanjali of the former.

It is true that Kapila's jealousy for the freedom

[1] *Aph.*, I. 155. [2] *Aph.*, III. 73. [3] *Aph.*, II. 29.
[4] Ibid., III. 47. [5] Ibid., III. 51; VI. 40. [6] Ibid., II. 23.

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and self-subsistence of spirit carried him to the furthest possible isolation of its essence, *in each and every individual being*, from finite conditions. But the Sânkhya cannot, even in his logic, be called atheistic. On the contrary, as Bunsen has noticed, "God, regarded as the undivided Unity, therefore the eternal essence of minds when perfected, is an assumption, or *postulate*, running through the whole system, like that of the existence of light in a treatise on colors;" and fairly inferrible, as a "Divine Order of the Universe," from the "recognition of reason, knowledge, righteousness, as common attributes of these individual minds."[1] And the latest translator of the Bhagavadgitâ, in an elaborate review of Hindu philosophy, asserts, from a point of view quite different from Bunsen's, that the Sânkhya "not only does not deny the existence of a Supreme Being, but even hints at it in referring the emanation of individual souls to a spiritual essence gifted with volition."[2] The idea of a multiplicity of souls, real, endless, and eternally distinct from body, is not inconsistent with theism; since the Nyâya, which follows the Sânkhya in this belief, also declares the Supreme Soul (Paramâtmâ) to be "one, eternally wise, and the source of all things."[3]

It is curious to note how similar, in many respects, is Patanjali's description, in his theistic Yoga[4] system, of an "*Iśwara*," or Lord, to that which Kapila gives of "*Soul*,"—"untouched by troubles, works, fruits, or deserts." Were not both seeking, each in his own way, the spiritual ideal in its independence of limit or change? Kapila could not have admitted

[1] *God in History*, I. 336.

[2] Thomson's *Bhag. Gitâ, Introd.*, p. lviii. Such definite reference to emanation I have not been able to find in Kapila.

[3] Colebrooke's *Essays*, I. 268.

[4] "Yoga" means *conjunction* (with deity).

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an Iśwara, like that of the Yoga, who is in one sense distinct from all actual souls; yet his conception of soul itself afforded ample basis for the idea of infinite Mind. Theistic scholiasts on Kapila's aphorisms affirm that his denial of an Iśwara is but hypothetical, not absolute. It would have been more correct to say that it did not deny *central and immanent deity*.

In truth it was Kapila's function to apply a disintegrating analysis to the *monarchical. supernaturalistic*, as well as to the *blindly pantheistic*, conceptions of his time.

He simply shows that there is no evidence of an *Iśwara*, or Lord, — that is, of a "governor of nature," in such a sense as the separation of soul from nature and its isolation as witness forbade; one, namely, whose action would involve imperfection; the sway of some "passion" or desire; a certain needy "working for his own benefit or glory, like a worldly lord;"[1] one whose interference should be necessary to the retributions of conduct, — an inadmissible condition, in his view; since works produced their consequences by having their law for ever in themselves. Christian theology also has its Iśwara. The interfering, self-interested Providence, the "deus ex machinâ" of the supernaturalist, is found in all religions, whether in early or late stages, wherever there is an unreasoning faith. It was this idea of a *mechanical* Deity that Kapila seems to have rejected so positively in the name of an inherent virtue in the constant course of things; the adequacy of those laws of being which he sought to unfold. And the like protest of rationalism returns to-day, at the culmination of a *Semitic* faith also, with similar sanctions and justifications. The

[1] *Aph.*, V. 3, 4, 6.

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selfishness of a God who could create man "for his own glory," and interfere capriciously with the laws he has made, renders denial of *such* Iśwara a duty still.

All this is not positive piety, not heartfelt theism. But neither is it atheism. It does not deny *deity* to spirit. It denies creation and interference *ab extra*, *by* spirit; and this, in order to exalt it above all that is conditional, and to isolate it so that it may affirm its own highest ideal of freedom and self-subsistence. And, with all its emphasis on the multiplicity of souls, it constantly describes soul *as such*, — not souls, but soul, — as if it were indeed but one in essence, after all: one of those unconscious confessions, by which all reasoning assumes the necessity of primal unity; in other words, of God. Love indeed does not move in these depths of logic. But the intellect also has its work to do, and we have here a legitimate form of this work.

If Kapila is not distinctly ethical and theistic, it is, we repeat, because he is not teaching a religion, but a system of analytic philosophy; because the Sânkhya is a criticism, not a confession of faith. If it is incomplete; if it does not fuse its own elements and reconcile its own poles of thought, it is yet a protest against the one-sided mysticism and supernaturalism, which do not sufficiently guard the dignity and serenity of spirit, in the form under which they conceive its relation to the world.

Fruits of the Sânkhya.

It was in fact found easy to develop out of the Sânkhya those very elements of universal religion which it failed of positively affirming. Its intellectual criticism was the condition and germ at once of the purest theism and the most practical

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humanity in Oriental history; of lessons in love and worship which Christendom cannot afford to despise nor to ignore.

Its clear separation of soul from sense was unfolded into the theistic Sânkhya and the Karma Yoga of the Bhagavadgitâ, in which the old Vedantic pantheism is inspired with the thought of deity as both independent and providential; as at once purely spiritual, and the All in all.

Its free dealing with bibliolatry and tradition, its appeal to practical reason, and its trust in the adequacy of the dialectic faculty, issued not only in the independence of the best Purânas; but, far better than this, in the pure democracy and boundless brotherhood of Buddhism, — a gospel of "mercy for all."

Had those contemplative philosophies been so paralyzing to the heart and will as they would at first seem, they could not have afforded groundwork for even a *reaction* to this great impulse, Oriental in its scale and ardor, to emancipate the world through love.

Instinct of Unity.

Our review of Hinduism already justifies us in affirming that the profound intuition of Unity traversed the whole field of desire and belief, and that in this one branch of the Aryan race it found scope for revealing those great typical moulds in which its aspirations are elsewhere found to grow.

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III.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITÂ.

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THE BHAGAVAD-GITÂ.

THE date of the Bhagavadgitâ, or "Divine Lay," the most important episode of the Ma- The Divine hâbhârata, although uncertain, cannot be far Lay. distant on either side from the beginning of the Christian era.[1] It embodies, in the form of dialogue, a revelation by Krishna, as incarnation of the Supreme, to the hero Arjuna, on the field of Kuru; and the armies of two opposing dynasties, about to join battle, are drawn up in silence to await the close of this transcendental communion between the man and the god. Its initial motive is to remove the scruples of the prince against destroying human life, which have paralyzed his power to fulfil the duties of a soldier and a ruler. To this end it celebrates the sovereignty of the soul over the body, its eternal essence, which death cannot harm, and the fulfilment of personal duty as the way of life and the path of glory. The use of such arguments to reconcile men to the sternest obligations involved in a state of war is itself an impressive illustration of the power of ideal interests. It contrasts favorably with the use of arguments from immortality to justify the destruction of the heretic's body in order to save his soul from eternal woe, or to

[1] Thomson's transl., *Introd.*, p. cxiv.; Lassen's *Preface*, p. xxxvi.

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make the threat of future punishment more appalling.[1] The meditations of Arjuna before a Hindu epic battle contrast in many ways with the prayers of Cromwell's soldiers before a real English one. They are, however, alike in the recognition of ideal relations in the sternest actual work.

But this is incidental to the great purpose of the poem, which covers the whole ground of theology, philosophy, and ethics. It is the final flower of Hindu intellect and piety; the summary reconciliation and poetic fusion of the best elements that preceded it in the mystical, rationalistic, and practical schools.

It is better known to modern scholars than any other production of Oriental genius; having been again and again edited with rare critical industry, resulting in the statement of Schlegel, based on diligent comparison of a great number of manuscripts, that the differences between these are almost imperceptible; while Lassen, after a still more extended use of materials, adds but fifteen slight emendations.[2] The disagreement among translators and critics on here and there a passage[3] interferes in no degree with our sense of possessing an accurate transcript of this, the most important of all records of Eastern faith, into the languages of the West.[4] And the enthusiasm of its European students almost rivals that veneration which in India has assigned it a place not inferior in dignity and authority to the Vedas themselves.[5]

Wilhelm von Humboldt celebrates it as "the most

[1] See Matt. xii. 32; xxv. 41.

[2] *Lassen*, p. xxxiv.

[3] See especially Wilson's criticisms on Lassen and Schlegel (*Essays on Sanks. Literature*, vol. iii.).

[4] The translations consulted in the present chapter are Schlegel's Latin version, edited by Lassen (1846), and the English versions of Wilkins (1785) and Thomson (1855).

[5] *Lassen*, p. xxvii.

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beautiful, perhaps properly the only true, philosophical song, that exists in any known tongue." Lassen shrinks from attempting to recommend it, lest he should imply that it has need of any praise of his. Warren Hastings notes a "sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled;" and Schlegel closes his Latin version with a pious invocation of the unknown prophet bard, "whose oracular soul is as it were snatched aloft into divine and eternal truth with a certain ineffable delight."

It is indeed, though not without its imperfections like the rest, one of the grand immortal forms in religious literature; an eternal word of the Spirit in man.

Its comprehensiveness.

It combines in broad and inspired synthesis the various points of view from which the Hindu schools had contemplated the union of philosophy and faith. Opening with the practical doctrine of duty, as conceived by the Yoga, it unfolds the Idea of God from the best side of the Vedânta, and the speculative analysis of man's spiritual relations after the formulas and in the freedom of the Sânkhya, and ends with the substance of mystical piety, — deliverance, through self-renunciation and devotion, into union with deity.

Its universality.

It adheres indeed to the system of caste; yet seeks to soften its injustice[1] by declaring perfection open to all who do faithfully their own work, and making this very dogma of natural subordination emphasize the call to every class to seek refuge in God. Even while, with the old contempt which Buddhism had repudiated so nobly, it once mentions women with the lowest castes, it yet declares that

[1] A method not unlike that of the early Christian teachers touching slavery.

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all who resort to God will reach the highest goal.[1] Krishna says: —

"I have neither friend nor foe: I am the same to all. And all who worship me dwell in me, and I in them."[2]

"To them who love me, I give that devotion by which they come at last to me."[3]

"The soul in every creature's body is invulnerable;[4] and none who has faith, however imperfect his attainment, or however his heart have wandered from right discipline, shall perish, either in this world or in another. He shall have new births, till, purified and made perfect, he reaches the supreme abode."[5]

"Mankind turn towards my path in every manner, and according as they approach me so do I reward them."[6]

Its god intimate with man.

Deity here is not abstraction, but speaks to man as Creator, Preserver, Friend. Krishna is the companion and intimate counsellor of Arjuna, revealing to him out of pure love[7] the law of duty and the path of immortal life; yet preserving the majesty and mystery of the Infinite. This is the "Supreme Universal Spirit," above and behind the universe, as well as its inmost substance; the Maker as well as the All. "I am the origin of all; from me all proceeds."[8] "Thou," says Arjuna, "thou only, knowest thyself by thyself, O Creator and Lord of all that exists, God of gods, most ancient of Beings!"[9] And Krishna says, "I am the soul that exists in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle, the end, of all things."[10]

The vision of Time as destroyer.

He is death as well as life; absorbing all forms, to the terror of the finite worshipper; yet the terror is not meant to be final. Arjuna would behold the whole infinite of deity with mortal eyes. His prayer is answered; and he sees what

[1] *Bh. G.*, ch. ix. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., ch. x. [4] Ibid., ch. ii.
[5] Ibid., ch. vi. [6] Ibid., ch. iv. [7] Ibid., ch. x. [8] Ibid., ch. x.
[9] The term is *Purusha*, or *person*, ch. x. [10] Ibid., ch. x.

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mortal eyes *can* see, the onward sweep of atoms and worlds and souls from life to death. This is the terrible, all-devouring form under which the god appears. The mystery of time, whelming all objects of sense, is concentrated into One Visible Shape, clothed by the tropical imagination, which most dreads the power of fire, in terrors and splendors that no eye can endure. The transient, for ever vanishing into the bosom of the eternal, stands manifest in one immeasurable symbol. Flaming mouths and ventral abysses open to engulf it; down these, through rows of dreadful teeth, the human heroes rush, by their own will, as full streams roll on to meet the ocean, as troops of insects seek their death in the taper's flame.[1] Very apt symbolism it is, in view of the other and immediate purpose, to reconcile the hero to the dread necessity of carnage that fronted the assembled hosts.

As in the old Hebrew legends men fall upon their faces before the vision of Jehovah, so is it with Arjuna here. But this "awe is mingled with delight." And its cry of trust is, — Its friendly meaning.

"Thou shouldst bear with me, O God! as a father with his son, as a friend with his friend, a lover with his beloved. Be gracious, O habitation of the universe! show me thy other [more human] form."[2]

And the vision of destruction vanishes, when the divine *relations* of destruction are thus made plain, into the familiar shape of the companion and friend. Through the terrors of Death and Time, that eternal good-will has been abiding unchangeable; and the sublimest lesson of life is learned.

"Be not alarmed, nor troubled, at having seen this my terrible

[1] *Bh. G.*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid.

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form. But look free from fear, with happy heart, upon this other form of mine.

"That which thou hast seen is very difficult to behold; not to be seen by studying the Vedas, nor by mortifications, nor alms-givings, nor sacrifices. Even the gods are always anxious to behold that form. But only by worship, which is rendered to me alone, am I to be seen, and known in truth, and obtained. He cometh to me whose works are done for me, who holdeth me supreme; who is my servant only; who hath abandoned all consequences, and liveth amongst all men without enmity."[1]

Hindu and Christian incarnations.

This Hindu form of the faith that deity is present in human shape, to teach, console, instruct, and save men, and to make clear and sweet to them the mysteries of death and change, differs from the Christian idea of incarnation, as set forth in the gospel of John, in this respect among others, that it does not seek to confine the freedom of the universal and infinite to a single historic form. Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, the all-pervading Preserver, is not claimed to be the only possible Word of God in the flesh for all time. Not once for all is this immanent life invested in a man.

"Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am lord of all created beings, yet in my command over nature as mine own, I am made evident by my own (mâyâ) power; and as often as there is a decline of virtue and insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident; and thus I appear, from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of virtue."[2]

This is the Krishna of philosophy; but it expressed a truth that lay deep in the religious instinct of the people.

Accordingly, for the worship of the "all-pervading Preserver," incarnation, or *avatâra* (descent), runs

[1] *Bh. G.*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid., ch. iv.

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through every form of life, beginning in earliest ages with the creatures in which it was supposed that the primitive piety of mankind must have beheld deity, and passing on through a series of saints, heroes, redeemers, to a final judge, so reaching to the bounds of time. In the latest Purânas no less than twenty-two of these avatâras are ascribed to this unfailing providence;[1] not all indeed of a noble or worthy quality, but such as the varying degrees of spiritual and moral intelligence in the worshippers compelled.

Avatâra system not due to Christian influence.

It has never been shown that any appreciable influence was exerted by Christianity upon the formation of this Avatâra system of the Hindus. Neither the Apostle Thomas, nor Nestorian Christians from Syria, nor a stray legend about some distant realm of mystical monotheists, that turns up among the leaves of the old epic, nor traces of very secluded and unimportant Christian settlements in later times upon the coasts of India, can be made available for refuting the claim of Hindu religious genius to uninterrupted assurance that preserving deity is manifested in constantly renewed forms upon the earth. Lassen, after a careful inquiry into the traditions of a Christian origin of this belief, reaches the conclusion that we cannot ascribe to missionaries of the church any influence whatever in shaping these religious conceptions of the Hindus.[2]

The Krishna Avatâra, in special, has been supposed, not only from the resemblance between the

[1] See Lassen's account of them in *Indische Alterthumskunde*, IV. 578–586. Also note on Thomson's *Bhag. G.*, p. 147.

[2] Weber (*Ind. Stud*, I. 400) and Hardwick (*Christ and other Masters*, I. 254) maintain the theory of Christian influence; but all its points seem to be fully met by Lassen, and no real evidence has been adduced in its defence. There is no proof whatever that the Apostle Thomas ever saw India, and none that Nestorian missions had any influence there before the fifth century.

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names Krishna and Christ, but from certain correspondences in the later Purânic legends with those of the infancy of Jesus, to have originated in these relations with Christianity. But the resemblances are of slight import; and the belief itself goes back, at the latest, to the time of Megasthenes, three centuries before the Christian era. This writer describes Krishna as the Indian Hercules, who had "traversed the whole earth and sea, to purify them from evil;" and even identifies his worship with Mathura, the native place of Krishna in the legend.[1]

Origin of the Krishna Avatâra.

The similarity of the names, Krishna and Christ, is purely accidental. The word Krishna means *the black*. And it forms the pivot of a very curious tendency among the Aryan Hindus to venerate that very color which they despised in the aboriginal tribes of India, and which marked the lowest and most degraded of the castes. For, in spite of these antagonisms, strange symbols of a deeper brotherhood seem to crop out in several interesting myths, both philosophical and poetic. Here, for instance, in the Bhagavadgitâ, Krishna, or the *black*, is the intimate friend and divine counsellor of Arjuna, or the *white*, — a feature which cannot be accidental. And in the Vishnu Purâna, Vishnu sends two of his hairs, the one white, the other black, to remove by their joint virtue the miseries of the whole earth. I can hardly help believing that this respect for the dark skin points to very early recognitions of a common humanity; and it is not improbable that Krishna worship itself is the mark of some profound influence exerted on the faith of the aristocratic Aryans by the conquered tribes of India. The generally democratic character of this

Its possible relations.

[1] *Lassen*, I. 647; II. 1107.

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wide-spread and deeply rooted form of worship would thus be explained. And the exaltation of a representative of the enslaved race as divine guide of their white master, in the noblest intellectual achievement his literature can boast, is a piece of fine poetic justice, which gives dignity to the whole history of the Hindus. And it associates the oldest with the latest phases of our Aryan pride of race, in a common lesson for coming time.

Its history.

From the early period above mentioned, down to the latest Purâna, the Bhâgavata, in the thirteenth century, Krishna comes constantly into view, in the utmost variety of forms, — as protecting hero; as saint and sage, mastering evil spirits instead of physical and outward enemies; as inspired shepherd boy, idyllic lover of the country maidens, and wonder-worker in the spheres of popular interests and pursuits; assuming in the epic mythology, where all the numberless rills of popular belief have flowed together, all imaginable powers and forms of character.[1] He says in the Bhagavadgitâ, "I am representative of the supreme and incorruptible, of eternal law and endless bliss."[2]

In the Bhâgavata Purâna he is exalted as the ideal centre of all virtues, human and divine; and saviour of men through the blessings he bestows on all who enter his spiritual being through meditation and holy discipline.[3] His worship is thus a purely native product of Hindu sentiment. And the sublime assertion, in the Bhagavadgitâ, of his incarnation whenever right needs to be re-established and wrong to be overturned, requires no other explanation than an intuitive

[1] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv.
[2] Ibid., ch. xiv.
[3] See Th. Pavie's *Krishna et sa Doctrine* (Paris, 1852).

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faith in the intimate union of deity with life and the world.

Relation to pantheism.

We may further observe, as characteristic of Hindu religious development, an effort in the history of Krishna-worship to purify pantheism of its cruder elements. The pantheistic sense of divine immanence and universality naturally involves profound moral and spiritual meaning. With the advancement of thought, such better significance is brought to the interpretation of popular beliefs of whatever nature. Krishna is the common term which Hinduism has maintained as the thread of its religious tradition; and, in the heterogeneous web of the Mahâbhârata, all its meaning for the popular mind has been wrought over in the interest of the higher form of pantheism just mentioned. So that the Krishna of the epic presents the very noblest traits which the Hindu mind was able to conceive, as will be seen hereafter.

The play of illusion, under which his assumption of all forms of human sympathy and desire is believed by the more spiritually-minded to be masked, is frequently lifted away, revealing what is held to be his inmost reality, by which the often questionable phenomena are to be mystically interpreted; a process of compromise to which all distinctive religions have in their different ways, from time to time, subjected their sacred books. The substance of this higher pantheism is expressed in language like the following: —

"Know that Dharma (righteousness) is my first-born beloved Son, whose nature is to have compassion on all creatures. In his character, I exist among men, both present and past, in different disguises and forms. While all men live in unrighteousness, I, the

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unfailing, build up the bulwark of right, as the ages pass. Assuming various divine births to promote the good of all creatures, I act according to my nature."[1]

Upon this grand postulate of the constant presence and watchful intimacy of deity with man, as guide and deliverer, the Bhagavadgitâ sought to unfold the sympathies of past and present forms of faith.

Sympathies of thought in the Bhagavadgitâ.

It declared that knowledge and action are one in worship.[2]

"Children only, not the wise, speak of the Sânkhya (rational) and the Yoga (devotional) religious systems as different. He who sees their unity sees indeed. The place which is gained by the followers of the one is gained by the followers of the other."[3]

"He who can behold inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise amongst mankind."[4]

"There are divers ways of sacrificing; and all purify men. But the worlds are not for him who worships *not*."[5]

For one to reach this higher point of spiritual recognition, the Veda, with the subtle questions thereon that have distracted the conscience, must have become secondary, and be held as transient means to a spiritual end.

Bible and mediators.

"When thy mind shall have worked through the snares of illusion, thou wilt become indifferent to traditional belief. When thy mind, liberated from the Vedas,[6] shall abide fixed in contemplation, thou shalt then attain to real worship."[7]

"Thou shalt find it in due time, spontaneously, within thyself."[8]

This freer treatment of the "sacred scriptures" de-

[1] *Mahâbh.*, XIV. [2] *Bhag. G.*, ch. iii. [3] Ibid., ch. v.
[4] Ibid., ch. iv. [5] Ibid., ch. iv.
[6] So Thomson translates *nirveda*, which according to Wilson also (*Essays on Sanskr. Lit.*, III. 128) means "certainty of the futility of the Vedas." Schlegel translates the passage thus: "sententiis theologicis antea distracta." Only Wilkins differs: his reading is, "by study brought to maturity," which can hardly be correct.
[7] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ii. [8] Ibid., ch. iv.

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serves notice, as showing how strong is the demand, even in a race whose faith naturally turns to the past, for escape from a bible-worship, which still dominates far more enlightened communities. In every great form of Hindu philosophy we find this opening upward into freedom from sacred text and rite. The Vedânta declares "the science of the Vedas inferior to the science of soul." The Sânkhya denies the eternity of the hymns, and asserts fullest liberty of interpretation. The Bhagavadgitâ holds real worship to be that in which the Vedas have no further place, having done their work, and given way to the vision and enjoyment of deity. The Ramâyâna and Mahâbhârata speak of themselves as equal to the Vedas. The Purânas, in general, go much further. The Bhâgavadgitâ says: —

Reactions against bibliolatry.

"As great as is the use of a well when it is surrounded by overflowing waters, so great and no greater is the use of the Vedas to a Brahman endowed with knowledge."

But the Bhâgavata Purâna: —

"Men do not worship the Supreme when they worship Him as circumscribed by the attributes specified in the hymns. Thou who strewest the earth with thy sacrificial grass, and art proud of thy numerous immolations, knowest not what is highest work of all."

The Brâhmanas speak of the limitations of the Vedas in the same tone. Even Manu perceives that the spirit must interpret the text, to make it of service. The progress of experience brought fresh inspirations that criticised the older ones; and there were bitter controversies between the supporters of the different Vedas, fatal to the pretence of inviolable authority in either.[1]

[1] See *texts* in Muir, III. ch. i.

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The "spiritual knowledge" which is to be substituted for all written or traditional objects of faith, as the supreme end of life, is called *jnâna*.[1] Spirituality.
The Bhagavadgitâ describes what it reveals as deity, in terms most clearly expressive of spiritual being: —

"It is that which hath no beginning, and is supreme; not the existent alone, nor the non-existent alone; with hands and feet on all sides, at the centre of the world comprehending all; exempt from all organs, yet shining with the faculties of all; unattached, yet sustaining every thing; within and without; afar, yet near; the light of lights, the wisdom that is to be found by wisdom, implanted in every breast."[2]

"The recompense of devotion is greater than any that can be promised to the study of the Vedas, or the practice of austerities, or the giving of alms."[3] Independence.

"Better than material sacrifice is the sacrifice of spiritual wisdom."[4]

"Men are seduced from the right path by that flowery sentence proclaimed by the unwise, who delight in texts from the Vedas, and say, 'there is nothing else than that,' covetous of heaven as the highest good, offering regeneration as the reward of mere performances, and enjoining rites for the sake of pleasures and powers."[5]

"The worship of *personages* as divine bestowers of all good seeks to propitiate such personages; and receives, *as from them*, its reward, which yet comes after all only from God. But the reward of these disciples of little mind is finite. They who worship gods go to their gods. They who worship me come to me. Only the unwise believe that I, who neither am born nor die, am confined to a visible form."[6]

While the power of attaining union with essential truth and good, independently of permanent or exclusive mediators, is thus affirmed as indispensable to the highest life, the ethical conditions of such attainment are not slighted. The authority of the moral nature has all due reverence. Ethical culture; action.

[1] Compare Greek γνῶσις, Latin *nosco*, Saxon *know*. [2] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xiii.
[3] Ibid., ch. viii. [4] Ibid., ch. iv. [5] Ibid., ch. ii. [6] Ibid., ch. vii.

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What is the secret of duty? O Arjuna! the old eternal answer, — the soul knows no other: — Master the senses, and subdue desires. Of all actions the consequences are *bonds* determined and inevitable. What is the self-centred act, what the pleasure of mere physical contact, that comes but to pass again, leaving unsatisfied desire behind it, but "a womb of pain"? Is then all activity to be renounced? By no means.

"No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every one is involuntarily urged to act, by principles which are inherent in his nature. Inertness is not piety. Perform, then, thy functions. Action is better than inaction."

"But as this world entails the bonds of action on every work but that which has worship for its object, therefore abandon, O son of Kunti! all selfish motive, and perform thy duty for God alone."

"Even if thou considerest only the good of mankind, still thou shouldst act. For what good men practise, others will practise likewise."

"I have no need of any good, that I should be obliged to do any thing throughout the three worlds; *yet do I for ever work*. For if I did not, — men follow in my steps in all things, and the people would perish."[1]

"But every work is comprehended in wisdom: seek thou this, by worship, inquiry, service."[2]

"Whoso abandons all interest in the reward of his actions shall be contented and free: though engaged in work, he, as it were, doeth nothing. The same in success and failure, even though he acts he is not bound by the bonds of action. His mind led by spiritual knowledge, and his work done for the sake of worship, his own action is, as it were, dissolved away."

"God is the gift, the sacrifice, the altar-fire; God the maker of the offering; and God, the object of his meditation, is by him attained."[2]

Motive.

"Let thy motive lie in the deed, and not in the reward: perform thy duty, and make the event equal, whether it terminate in good or ill. This is devotion."[3]

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. iii. [2] Ibid., ch. iv. [3] Ibid., ch. ii.

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"He who puts aside self-interest is not tainted by sin, but remains unaffected, as the lotus-leaf is not wet, by the waters." [1]

"What is given for the sake of a gift in return, or for the sake of the fruit of the action, or reluctantly, is a gift of inferior quality." [2]

"Whatever thou doest, do as offering to the Supreme." [3]

"He who casts off desires, he into whose heart desires enter but as rivers run into the never-swelling, passive ocean, he is tranquil; and there springs in him separation from all trouble. He only whose thoughts are gathered in meditation can find rest." [4] Mastery of desires.

"The wise are troubled to determine what is action and what is not. I will tell thee the path of deliverance. He is the doer of duty who beholds inaction in action, and action in inaction, free from the sense of desire: his action is consumed by the fire of knowledge." [5]

"As a candle placed in shelter from the wind does not flicker, so is he who, with thoughts held in devotion, delighteth in his soul, knowing the boundless joy that the mind attains beyond sense, whereon being fixed it moveth not from truth; and who, having attained it, regardeth no other attainment as so great as it is, nor is moved by severest pain." [6]

"Seek refuge in thy mind." [7]

"Let one raise his soul by his own means: let him not lower his soul; for he is his soul's friend or enemy. He who has subdued himself by his soul finds that self which, by reason of the enmity of what is not spiritual, might be a foe, the friend of his soul." [8] Self-respect.

"Draw in the senses from objects of sense, as the tortoise its limbs; for when the heart follows their roaming it snatches away spiritual wisdom as a wind a ship on the waves." [9] Spirituality of purpose.

Yet even in the practice of ascetic disciplines, commended to the devotee who would concentrate his mind on God alone, excess is discounten- Moderation.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. v. [2] Ibid., ch. xvii. [3] Ibid., ch. ix.
[4] Ibid., ch. ii. [5] Ibid., ch. iv. [6] Ibid., ch vi.
[7] Ibid., ch ii. [8] Ibid., ch. vi. [9] Ibid., ch. ii.

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anced; and fanatical abstinence from food, sleep, recreation, action, are discouraged, — he only being a true devotee who is moderate in all things, and, above all, in his desires.[1] How these opposite tendencies are reconciled does not indeed appear. It has been supposed[2] that indifference to results was substituted for abandonment of action, from a sense of the necessity of modifying the strictness of ascetic practices, which is very probable.

Practical virtues.

Such are the cultures of piety, — contemplative mainly, and in their final aim. But practical virtues are held as equally imperative. Such are fearlessness, temperance, rectitude, veracity, a harmless spirit, freedom from anger, liberality, modesty, gentleness, benevolence towards all, stability, energy, fortitude, patience, purity, resolution, and the absence of vindictiveness and conceit.[3] These are enforced as positive duties. They are described, also, as the path of those who are "born to the lot of divine beings," while those who have them not gravitate the other way.

Natural destiny.

All actual conditions were, to the Hindu, profoundly retrospective. They must somehow find their ground in the determinations of a divine Order. There was more in moral good and evil than mere fruit of culture. And to be "born to the lot" of divine or depraved beings must of course have meant something beyond caste-distinctions. A sense of destiny came mightily down on the dreamer's vision, as he thought of the prodigious force of natural endowment in determining the paths of conduct. Virtues were upward tracks, for which, it was plain, some had

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. vi. [2] Wilson, III. 110. [3] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xvi.

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a kind of natural fore-ordination; while the birth-doom of others drove them in the opposite direction into correspondent vices. And here the poet's moral judgment seems too much absorbed in the sense of inevitable consequence to recognize that apparent injustice in such predestinations, which demanded solution. And he turns the evil-doers away[1] upon their downward path of bestial transmigrations, with as little apparent sympathy as is conveyed in that kindred sentence from another gospel: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Doubtless in the one case, as in the other, the special aspect under which moral evil was, for the moment, intensely conceived, excluded other and kindlier elements of faith, which elsewhere enter into both these gospels, though in different ways. With the Hindu, the deliverance from these bonds of destiny might surely be found in the all-embracing mystic unity of spiritual life, as with the Hebrew in the depths of the Fatherhood of God. And yet it is evident of the one as of the other gospel, that its central idea had not reached its own full significance, as a guaranty for the preservation and perfection of all spiritual forces, even in the mind of its greatest teacher.

But we must not overlook the fact, that this whole poem is intent on pointing out the ways in which the dark, bewildering, bestializing *gunas*, or organic qualities, might be "burned away in the fires of worship." It implies a certain inherent and absolute power in these disciplines and endeavors, to accomplish their purpose. They involve a higher freedom, which contravenes the apparent fatalities of evil.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xvi.

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The path open to all.

And for all aspirations alike there was the One Life that animated all lives, an unfailing promise, justification, and resource.

"Rest assured, O son of Kunti! that they who worship me, shall never die. I am the pledge of their bliss."[1]

"Forsake all other reliance, and fly to me alone. I will deliver thee from all thy transgressions."[2]

"Even if one whose ways have been ever so bad worship me alone, with devotion, he shall be honored as a just man; for he has judged aright. He soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, and entereth eternal rest."[3]

"He my servant is dear to me, who is free from enmity, the friend of all nature, merciful, exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, of subdued passions and firm resolves, and whose mind is fixed on me alone.

"He also is worthy of my love who neither rejoices nor finds fault; neither laments nor covets; and, being my servant, has forsaken both good and evil fortune.

"He is my beloved who is the same in friendship and hatred, in honor and dishonor, unsolicitous about the event of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, and pleased with whatever cometh to pass; who owneth no particular home, and who is of steadfast mind.

"They who seek this amrita [immortal food] of religion, even as I have said, and serve me faithfully, are dearest of all."[4]

Concentration of virtues in worship.

Here the independent witness-soul of the Sânkhya is combined with a Vedantic reverence for the One Universal Life, and a Buddhistic recognition of action and social duties. The meaning of this blending of stoical indifference, pious ardor, and human love, can only lie in the effort to consecrate the whole of life, to fuse every element of the human ideal in the one purpose of worship, as substantial unity with the Highest, as all-sufficing joy.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ix.
[2] Ibid., ch. xviii.
[3] Ibid., ch. ix.
[4] Ibid., ch. xii. (Wilkins).

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"They who worship me dwell in me, and I in them."[1]

"By him who constantly seeks me, without wandering of mind, I am easily found."[2]

"Thinking on me, absorbed in me, teaching each other, and constantly telling of me, the wise are blessed. To such as seek me with constant love, I give the power to come to me. Through my compassion, while remaining in my own essence, I yet turn their darkness into light."[3]

"Most dear am I to the spiritually wise, and he is dear to me. The distressed, the seeker for light, the desirer of good, the wise, are all exalted; but the wise, whose devout spirit rests on me, I hold even as myself."[4]

"Though thou wert the greatest of offenders, thou shalt cross the gulf of sin in this bark of spiritual wisdom. He who hath faith shall find this; and, having found it, shall speedily attain rest for his soul. No bonds of action hold the mind which hath cut asunder the bonds of doubt. Son of Bhârata, sever thy doubt in worship, and arise!"[5]

Moral penalties.

And, on the other side, the inevitableness of moral penalty is as positively asserted. It rests not on any arbitrary decree, but on the essential qualities of conduct. It is associated indeed in certain aspects with the notion that the castes originated in these moral qualities, and their due subordinations;[6] for the Bhagavadgitâ does not attain the grand democracy of Buddhism. But the inherence of moral consequence according to purely moral quality is nevertheless strictly defined:—

"The pleasure that springs from serenity of mind is first like poison, and afterwards like the amrita of immortals; but the pleasures of the senses begin like amrita, and end as poisons; and the pleasure that is from sleepy sloth is the utter bewilderment of the soul."[6]

According to the quality that has ripened into predominance is the form the individual spirit assumes;

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ix. [2] Ibid., ch. viii. [3] Ibid., ch. x.
[4] Ibid., ch. vii. [5] Ibid., ch. iv. [6] Ibid., ch xviii.

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gravitating at death to the "imperishable place," or downwards, through lower forms of life, even to the "wombs of the senseless," or inorganic matter, if the deathly blight of *indifference* shall come to that at last.[1] "Threefold the gate of this hell, — avarice, anger, and lust."[2] Thus the bad are consigned, not to endless misery by one dread sentence, but to probations manifold; and, if hopelessly sunk, reaching at last a *quasi* annihilation, by laws of affinity alone; not to be preyed on by the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched; but, more mercifully (if that word be applicable at all), to become the clod or the stone, which testify that the capability to sin and to suffer are alike no more. So that hope ceases only with consciousness itself; for transmigration is a revolving wheel, and with every fresh birth comes fresh gift of opportunity for such intelligence as may still survive.

The blessed life beyond death.

"All worlds up to that of Brahmâ are subject to [the law of] return." But there is a state from which they who enter it do not need, as they cannot desire, to return.

"There is an invisible, eternal existence, beyond this visible, which does not perish when all things else perish, even when the great days of Brahmâ's creative life pass round into night, and all that exists in form returns unto God whence it came. They who obtain this never return."[3]

"They proceed unbewildered to that imperishable place, which is neither illumined by the sun nor moon; to that primeval Spirit whence the stream of life for ever flows."[4]

"Whoso beholds me in all things and all in me, I do not vanish from him, nor does he vanish from me; for in me he lives."[5]

"Bright as the sun beyond darkness is He to the soul that remembers Him in meditation, at the hour of death, with thought

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xiv. [2] Ibid., ch. xvi. [3] Ibid., ch. viii.
[4] Ibid., ch. xv. [5] Ibid., ch. vi.

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fixed between the brows, — Him the most ancient of the wise, the primal ruler, the minutest atom, the sustainer of all, — in the hour when each finds that same nature on which he meditates, and to which he is conformed." [1]

"They who put their trust in me, and seek deliverance from decay and death, know Brahma, and the highest spirit (Adhyâtma), and every action (karma). They who know me in my being, my person, and my manifested life, in the hour of death know me indeed." [2]

Who is this that is so known?

"The Soul in all beings, the best in each, and the inmost nature of all; their beginning, middle, end; the all-watching preserver, father and mother of the universe, supporter, witness, habitation, refuge, friend; the knowledge of the wise, the silence of mystery, the splendor of light; and death and birth, and all faculties and powers; the holiest hymn, the spring among seasons, the seed and the sum of all that is." [3]

And whoso by inward worship of God overcomes the blind qualities and dispositions, by devotion shall enter at once into His being.[4]

Personal immortality.

These conceptions of a future life seem to hover between absorption into deity and revolving cycles of ever-renewed births. Yet, through all this indistinctness, a certain sense of permanence must have been felt by those whose minds dwelt so constantly on the thought of somewhat eternal in the very consciousness of spiritual being. We have already seen that the mystical Hindu mind did not demand so distinct an assurance of continued personal consciousness after death as does the intense individualism of modern thought. Such positiveness of prediction would have been associated with limitations rather than with freedom: always the longing of mystical faith has been to lose limit in pure self-surrender, and find freedom in absolute present trust.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. viii.
[2] Ibid., ch. vii.
[3] Ibid., ch. ix. x. xi.
[4] Ibid., ch. xiv. xviii.

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Yet the Bhagavadgitâ recognizes the desire of continued being, as indeed it does not fail of recognizing almost every genuine aspiration. And when Krishna would allay the compassionate scruples of Arjuna against destroying human life, he points to the imperishable personality that resides in every soul. Its description fully corresponds with what we mean by that term. One with infinite soul, expanded to share the universal life, yet in a real sense distinct in itself, as being that in each soul which makes it real and eternal, it comes home to our experience as our own deepest sense of immortality, which transcends the thought of beginning as of end.

"As the soul in this body undergoes the changes of infancy, youth, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter.

"Know that these finite bodies have belonged to an eternal, inexhaustible, indestructible spirit. He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who believes it can be killed, both are wrong. Unborn, changeless, eternal, it is not slain when the body is slain.

"As a man abandons worn-out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies and enter others. Weapons cannot cleave, nor fire burn it. It is constant, immovable; yet it can pass through all things.

"If thou hadst thought it born with the body, to die with the body, even then thou shouldst not grieve for the inevitable; since what is born must die, and what is dead must live again. All things are first unseen, then seen, then at last unseen again. Why then be troubled about these things?

"Some hold the soul as a wonder, while some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one knoweth it, though he may have heard it described. The soul, in its mortal frame, is invulnerable.

"Grieve not then for any creatures, and abandon not thy duty. For a noble man that infamy were worse than death."[1]

"It is good to die doing thy own work: doing another's brings danger."[2]

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ii. [2] Ibid., ch. iii.

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The sense of immortality is here associated with the idea of duty, conceived indeed after a Hindu fashion. Wherever such connection is recognized as essential, there, under whatever special form duty may be presented, we may be sure that personality is involved in the idea of eternal life.

This "invulnerable soul" is in every one of the living beings before Arjuna on the battle-field of Kuru. "An imaginary thing can have no existence, nor can that which is real be other than a stranger to nonentity."[1] Is not this an implication of full faith in personal destinies? What limitation is possible to the sweep of this invulnerability of life through all special lives? What is it but the living path and the living goal, at once, for them all? It is a protest against the fate elsewhere in the Bhagavad-gitâ assigned to those who are fallen lowest in delusion and vice. The "wombs of the senseless" disappear before it. How can the soul die down into a clod, if soul is invulnerable? By this rescue of the substance, all that waste is made impossible. The higher "conservation of force," which resides in intelligence itself, forbids it. The "wombs of the senseless," like the "everlasting woes" of Christian theology, are, in fact, but mythological and dramatic fictions, in which the fears and hates arising from certain stages of moral development invest the idea of spiritual destiny. Intuitions of the eternal validity of that which is inmost substance and proper selfhood in every one, flash out by the side of these mythologic fancies, and reach beyond them, discerning the real purport of existence. This inmost personal life, rooted in essential life, contains all guaranties of good: whatever else dies out or

All destinies divine.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ii.

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revolves through phases of matter, coming up again in vapor or tree, that which is called "soul" in each, the intellectual and moral quality, the sphere of aspiration and relation to the infinite, however it may change and develop, must escape such fate, — must abide, according to this philosophy, in the imperishable place of soul itself. Honor to pantheism for affirming the oneness of spiritual substance, for the sweep of its great circle that leaves no life homeless and wandering outside God.

Correspondence with the Sânkhya.

The recognition of an inmost personality, lifted in pure independence of all the change and loss involved in actions and their fruits, is as positive in the Bhagavadgitâ as in Kapila's distinction between Prakriti and Purusha. In fact, this distinction, with the whole Sânkhya system,[1] is here fully set forth; though as but a single side of an eclectic philosophy, and combined — Kapila would hardly say, reconciled — with that oneness of spiritual being to which he objected as opposed to individual claims.

"He who beholdeth all his actions performed by Prakriti, at the same time perceives that his âtma [self] is inactive in them. The supreme soul, even when it is in the body, neither acts nor is it affected, because its nature is eternal, and free of qualities. As the all-penetrating ether, from the minuteness of its parts, passeth everywhere unaffected, so this spirit in the body. As one sun illumines the whole world, so does the one spirit illumine the whole of matter, O Bhârata! They who thus perceive the body and the soul as distinct, and that there is release, go to the Supreme."[2]

Universality of the Gitâ.

This effort to combine the Sânkhya with the Vedânta is but one element of the vast synthesis of faith attempted in the "Divine Lay" which

[1] The reader will recall the explanation of this distinction, as suggested in the chapter on the Sânkhya in the present volume, p. 388.

[2] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xiii.

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we are now studying. It has been described[1] as evading all great questions which divide the schools of belief, as hovering between faith and works, reason and devotion, the worship of the invisible and the worship of the visible God.[1] It is certain that the reconciliation of opposite tendencies is by no means clear or satisfactory. It is syncretism rather than fusion. It is intellectual recognition, rather than final system. But the breadth of this recognition is what deserves our admiration, the large justice done to every existing element of Hindu thought. Like its own Brahma, the Bhagavadgitâ is the *best* of every form, revealing its highest aspect, its spiritual purport. Faith is good, and works are good; but the goodness of each is in the subordination of one to the other. Absorption and transmigration are both real; but their meaning for the desire of immortality is in their respective meanings as the true end of life and the consequence of conduct. Not less real the worth of the Veda for the greater worth of *nirveda*, the divine certainty that lies beyond it. Sacrifices are good, yet only as the step to a higher service of God. The Sânkhya witness-soul is exalted; not less so the soul performing these duties that belong to its path in life. The *gunas*, or qualities of blind nature, have their tremendous moral issues; not less true are the all-dissolving Unity of Brahma, and the illusion of this universe that comes and goes, these worlds of life that are "subject to return." The eternal Substance abides, beyond all forms of existence, inconceivable, unknown. Yet every term by which the inmost personality of man is expressed is carried up into this divine substance, making it a fulness of life. It is

[1] Wilson, *Essay on Bhagav. Gitâ* (*Sanskr. Lit.*, III. 144).

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Purusha, personal soul. It is *Purushottâma*, Ultimate Personality. It is *Adhyâtma*, Over-Soul, or Divine Self. It is even *Maheśvara*, the Great Lord. It is the Avatâra, the perpetual providence, ever manifest in visible form to save the world.

This boundless hospitality to existing beliefs indicates at least the force with which the religious sentiment was embodied in them all at the time when the Bhagavadgitâ was written. One element betrays the Brahmanical source from which it flowed, the maintenance, however modified, of caste. Brahmanism is here seen, surrounded by rationalizing independent tendencies, seeking to accommodate itself to their demands, while maintaining the unity of religious development as a whole. Like the somewhat analogous production of the Christian Church, the Johannic Gospel, it is the work of the highest spiritual genius, the most deliberate and careful constructive skill, the most earnest desire of religious unity, which the tendencies it represented had at their command; and a spirit is moving through its speculative deeps, that could not be bound within the limits of any creed, — the spirit of Universal Religion.

The maker of the Lay.

We cannot wonder that in a time of contending sects, and amidst the distinctions of caste, the disclosure of this "sublime mystery" to the reviler, the indifferent, the unspiritual, should be forbidden.[1] How indeed, leaving caste out of the question, could it be made known to such? No deep religious faith fails wholly of that wisdom which knows where not to cast its pearls. As the Hebrew reformer clothed his doctrine in parables, for those who hearing did not hear, and as the Greek philosopher veiled his in symbols, so

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xviii.

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the Hindu mystic admonished his disciples that preparation was needed for receiving what only the eye of thoughtful attention could even behold. And was not this light of pure thought indeed shining in comparative darkness? Was it not on the heights of contemplation, in a region which the disciplined intellect alone could make a home? Yet we detect also behind these ethical and spiritual considerations the strict requirements of caste. Not here the broad humanity of Buddha, whose word was a gospel rather than a philosophy, and probably uttered with less of esoteric mystery or exclusiveness than that of any other teacher of the ancient world. The claims of the philanthropist differ from the claims of the seer.

Shall we not say with the latest English translator of this wonderful song, sung in the far East two thousand years ago, that "it is sufficient praise for the mystical old Brahman to have inferred, amidst darkness and ignorance, the vast powers of mind and will, and to have claimed for the soul the noble capacity of making the body and even external matter its slave?"

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IV.

PIETY AND MORALITY OF PANTHEISM.

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PIETY AND MORALITY OF PANTHEISM.

IF the Bhagavadgitâ is pantheistic, it is none the less theistic also. While these two terms in their extreme meaning represent widely different conceptions, here is a higher unity which seeks to include what is best in both. Whatever may have been the result of this effort, its comprehensiveness deserves special notice, in view of the demand of our civilization for a breadth and freedom which can appreciate every real element of human belief. In this spirit of the age, Goethe wrote to Jacobi that he could not be content with one way of thinking; that as artist and poet he was a polytheist, while as student of nature he was a pantheist.

The demand of the age.

All phases of religion appear alike imperfect, if defined as mutually exclusive systems. But their real affinities are coming to be comprehended in the unity of personal experience. We are learning to recognize theism, polytheism, and pantheism as legitimate parts of ourselves, to resume them under aspects which explain their power over races and times other than our own, and so to relieve the steps of human endeavor from disparagement by exclusive creeds.

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Justice to pantheism needed.

There are phases of skepticism and phases of science which seem to turn from religion as well as intuition with sweeping denial. There are phases of superstition apparently blind to all rights of skepticism and science. But both science and religion in our day are to receive a republican breadth of meaning. They will not only guard the right of every faculty and every aspiration to plead its own cause, but respect the witness it may be able to bring in its own behalf from the confidence of mankind.

To how purely negative a criticism has pantheism been subjected! Yet there must be truth in a form of belief which has satisfied enduring civilizations, and which has reappeared in philosophy and ethics wherever these have reached a high development, without regard to the lines which separate recognized religions or even races. It has usually been through some form of spiritual pantheism that these distinctive religions have escaped their limitations, and risen into a universality unknown either to their founders or to the ordinary current of their history. We may instance the Sufism of the Mohammedans, the Neo-Platonism of the Greeks, and the Mysticism that preceded the Reformation in Germany and Italy, and showed a far larger and profounder spirit than that movement. Modern philosophy has received its strongest impulse from a similar tendency in German thought. And the unities of political, intellectual, and religious life, at the present time, make the relation of pantheism to the coming age a question of real moment.

Whatever inferior forms of experience may have received or assumed the name, it is of great impor-

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tance to emphasize that special purport of pantheism which accounts for its frequent recurrence and its noble fruits. Our study of the Hindu schools of religious philosophy should help us to this result.

It is commonly insisted that all pantheistic systems are ways of confounding the Creator with the creation, and sinking the soul in the senses. This form of statement comes mainly from Semitic habits of thought inherited by Christianity. Pantheism could expect no other reception from their intense jealousy for the rights of an external deity, by whom the world is made out of nothing, and the human soul autocratically ruled.

What is Pantheism?

But, if pantheism *were* what this fixed impression of the Christian Church as a whole represents it, it would certainly be far from resembling the aspirations of those Hindu seers whom we have been studying in the preceding chapters of this volume. They, of all men, sought emancipation from the "wheel of the senses," and fervently believed in the possibility of union with the Absolute and Eternal.

In reality, pantheism, whether as sentiment or philosophy, is not the worship of a finite and visible world. In its nobler forms it is essentially of the spirit, and rests, as its name imports, on these principles: that Being is, in its substance, one; that this substantial unity is, and must be, implicated in all energy, though indefinably and inconceivably, — as Life, all-pervading, all-containing, the constant ground and ultimate force of all that is; and that the recognition of this inseparableness of the known universe from God is consistent with the worship of God as infinitely transcending it.

A theism of pure sentiment, following the Hebrew

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prophetic consciousness of intimacy with God, yet, like that earlier Semitism, too monarchical in its theory to recognize how completely all manifestation must be one with its spiritual substance, was the religious inspiration of Jesus and his companions. Not less was this the limit for every form under which Christianity could appear. Even the Gospel of John — though a later product, drawing largely from Greek and Oriental fountains, and imbued with mystical elements apparently unknown to the original faith as it was in Jesus — stopped short, on this track, with limiting the *pure* immanence of God in the universe to the ideally constructed person of Jesus, as the "Word made flesh." All pantheistic forms or tendencies of distinctive Christianity have had the same limitation, and this obscures the universal element, which nevertheless underlay and in fact prompted them.

Limits of Christian theism.

The ideal demand of modern life is for fuller recognition than was ever before possible, that spiritual being is of one substance. All religions measurably express this truth, and their aspirations after universality imply it. But their distinctive tendencies have interfered more or less harmfully with its free development and just emphasis. With the knowledge of universal laws there enters a more genial and inclusive spirit.

Modern ideal of unity.

Philosophy now aims at complete expression of the essential unity of subject with object, in what Aristotle called "thought thinking itself;" thus reaching the ultimate conception of One Spiritual Substance embracing all being within the scope of its self-affirmation.[1] The Imagination of our time divines, beyond

[1] This is involved even in the "relativity of all knowledge," which might seem to make it void; since the conception of this relativity implies recognition of its opposite, the non-relative or absolute, as the test of its own reality even *as* a conception.

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this metaphysical conception, that the living universe is the play of deity, through all forms and forces, all dream and faith and action, all names, all symbols, all religions. Its Piety and its Humanity must be more than a mere *recognition* of what is eternally good and true, as an object of thought: they aim at the *expression* of this, as far as possible, in forms of which *it* shall be at once the productive cause and the inseparable life. Its Sciences must recognize that what lies beyond their tests and explanations is really the one master force involved in every step of evolution from lowest to highest forms, the substance of these force-factors out of which all constructions flow. Its God must be no mere Creator of a distinct universe, in the sense of maker, constructor, provider; but far more, even the inmost Essence and Principle of all. The age, in fine, is resuming, in the fulness of its experience, the ideal meaning of all spiritual motives profound enough to have acquired distinctive names, and to have entered into the classification of religious systems.

I am not then forgetting the larger light of science and practical relation in the civilization of the West, when I bring the "Hindu dreamers" to help towards a better understanding of the needs of our time. It is these very forms of intellectual maturity that impel us to seek fresh meaning in all ancient divinations of the Unity of Being.

The mystery which we are to ourselves, and find in all things around us, not only transcends our theological terms, but effaces all scientific landmarks and distinctions. It is *by thought* we know all that we call God, the world, ourselves; and in all

The mystery of being.

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directions alike is thought incomprehensible to the thinker. Facts, phenomena, the operation of forces, we claim to understand simply because we employ them for our purposes, select them to meet definite demands, combine them in positive constructions. But of force we only know that it acts in certain ways, not *how* it can act thus, nor how act at all. And of the fleeting play of phenomena, what can we say but that the connection between mind and the physical organs through which they are perceived — nay, between mind and its own activity — is a mystery penetrable by no faculty that we possess. With a change in our mode of existence, the familiar universe would roll up as a scroll; though it were only to reappear in such new, unimagined form as may accord with new desires or needs, — so slight the hold of either our volition or our comprehension on the relations of our being. Yet we inevitably trust the reports of consciousness concerning its own objects. And how should this unison be possible, and this confidence and calm abide in the depths of the reason, but for an inmost *identity of essence, including within itself alike the truster and what he trusts?*

This presence of the unfathomable, in which all experience is involved, cannot be set aside on the ground that it is always unknown, and that a purely unknown factor may be eliminated from the problem. It *abides* everywhere: it is that which we *do* know most surely, even if we know nothing else, unless knowing means comprehending, in which case we should do well to drop the word altogether.

Nor can a universal element be eliminated and left out of the problem, — like a constant factor in arithmetic, — on the ground that it is constant and every-

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where of equal force.[1] It is *dynamic*, not arithmetical. It enters into the substance of each experience, with special influences in each. Its presence affects the spirit and attitude of inquiry, shapes the definitions, and saves from absorption in the finite side of experience. "They who prize experience exclusively," said Goethe, "forget that experience is but the half of experience."

The pantheistic side of thought.

Our victorious science fails to sound one fathom's depth on any side, since it does not explain the parentage of *mind*. For mind was in truth before all science, and remains for ever the seer, judge, interpreter, even father, of all its systems, facts, and laws. Our faculties are none the less truly above our heads because we no longer wonder, like children, at processes we do not understand. Spite of category and formula, of Kant and Hegel, we are abashed before our own untraceable thought. The stars of heaven, the grass of the field, the very dust that *shall be* man, foil our curiosity as much as ever, and none the less for yielding to the lens, the prism, and the polariscope of science ever new triumphs for our pride and delight. Not less mystical is mind because it will no longer be suppressed and stultified by mysteries of faith. True as ever is what Krishna says in the old Eastern reverie:—

"Some regard the soul as a miracle, while some speak of it, and others hear of it, with like astonishment; but no one comprehends it, even when he has heard it described."[2]

What know we of *matter?* Philosophy can define it as a form in which spirit manifests itself to spirit, a reflex of thought, an expression or mode of mind;

[1] This is Mr. Buckle's mode of historical computation: "The moral factor is constant: *ergo*, it has no influence."

[2] *Bhagavadgitâ*, ch. ii.

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and so escape the dualism that would seem involved in its being an independent reality. The spiritual is its substance, is what it means, is what we are conscious of, after all. What, then, is spiritual essence? We cannot define it, we know not how, only *that* it acts; still less do we know what it is. To remember, to hope, to love: these we explain only by themselves again. *That they are* is itself the mystery, all-pervading, infinite, — *To Be*.

Into such transcendence the whole of life enters, and with it all science, matter, force, and form. By this one fact of mystery alone, though we should look no further, the infinite of mind is found inseparable from all experience. And this "Unknowable" is known to be not merely continuous with the human, nor interpenetrating it merely, as space is pervaded by light, — but more. As a man's mind is in his thought and his love, so is essential mind the unfathomable *life* in which all intelligent spiritual forces move.[1]

In ethics and faith.

And this truth has still closer relations with our *moral* and *spiritual* nature. The sense of limit that for ever besets the understanding, withholding from us the meaning of the world and the purpose of existence in a certain repulsion as towards aliens and strangers, necessitates a path upwards to the freedom of an all-embracing idea, an all-dissolving unity, in which our individual imperfections shall, ideally at least, cease to separate us from the whole. This dualism, as between one who seeks

[1] Spencer (*Psychology*, p. 110) regards such ideas as anthropomorphic, and so without authority. But if the substance of the universe is not mind, as we are mind who think it, then the very conception of existence, on which that of substance depends, is also baseless as resulting from our mentality alone.

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and one who shuns, can yield only to a sense of inmost identity. The soul must gather the world and itself under one conception. It must see the whole, in other words, in God. Only the inseparableness of finite from infinite can assure our life of an origin and purport adequate to its nature. "Because God is," saith the soul, "therefore I am and shall be, — in God."

But to this assurance there is no other path than that of moral consecration. The reconciliation, the freedom, the unity, come only with absorption of the conscious self into the truth of principles, convictions, ideal aims; with finding, in the best moments, somewhat of thought or feeling, which "having been must ever be;" with participation in somewhat of divine nature and endless promise, through an absolute love and service: so that it shall no longer be the private self, but soul *as soul*, which affirms within us, and once for all,— "I am."

"O grace abundant, by which I presumed
To fix my sight upon the light eternal,
So that the seeing *I* consumed therein!
I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up in love together in one volume
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;
Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is *one simple light*."[1]

Such experience is limited to no age nor race. Through such paths as these, in such form as was possible within his special horizon, as I believe, the Hindu saint arrived at his pantheistic faith. This is the substance of the process, with whatever errors

[1] *Paradiso*, XXIII. (Longfellow's transl.).

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mingled, by whatever superstitions marred. Through such experiences not the saints and seers only, but simply earnest people, through much imperfection, have in every religion reached the certainty of infinite good, under whatever name, as inseparable from their own inward being.

Its ethical value.

These are truths not of the reason only, however they may accord with its higher processes; but primarily of religious sentiment, and especially in its dealing with the facts of moral and physical evil. For the root of all effective force against these facts as *actual* is in holding the good to be the one reality; in finding fast anchorage in this *ultimate*, *essential* fact which they are bound to subserve; in being sure that the whole process of life is somehow contained within the infinite rectitude of God. The Hindu dreamer, seeking to abolish evils by *thinking* them away; and the practical worker, in practical races and times, more effectually battling them down by *action*, — alike assume that the real and essential are to be found only in the good. Both seek to reach true being by denying the claim of evil to be positive and permanent; to read the world with clearer insight of its meaning; to affirm for the actual its ultimate significance in the ideal, in God.

We master the despair with which the prevalence of evils would otherwise overwhelm us, by assuring ourselves that evil is properly "good in the making," a condition of finite growth. This is but recognizing the fact that our philosophy cannot possibly be sound and healthful so long as it does not explain the finite by the infinite, and interpret the life of man in its wholeness as manifestation of God.

The best and bravest souls have always treated evils

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not as if their depressing side were the substance of their meaning, but as involving issues of all-reconciling good. This mystic faith, that things seen but in part are seen in illusion, and that they *are* seen but in part till they are brought out into relations that accord with ideal good, is as practical as it is speculative. Science itself can offer no other interpretation than this of the physical evil, which "final causes" and "special interferences" only aggravate by their implication of a divine intention. Its help is for the sternest and bitterest lot. It is an instinct of cheerful hope, where it has not yet become a clear perception of the reason. It inspires the will, where it finds no hold in the understanding. Its secret assurance is perhaps strongest in the simplest natures that are least perplexed with casuistry or doubt. It is apt to find clear and hopeful solutions of duty, whether men are dealing with their own sense of wrong-doing or with outward and social wrong.

We must *act* upon the testimony of the practical consciousness; hold common sense sacred; ignore no facts that life teaches; neglect no function of the understanding. But there is need of a philosophy in which the ideal only is seen as real; of hours when the eye is opened with vision of the divine alone. Alas for common sense itself, if our ideals have taught us no more than our understandings; if banks and ships and railroads do not sometimes dissolve as illusions in the white light of noble dreams; if even the woes and sins of the world, which permit no rest to the eyelids of faithful men, could never vanish before their sight into the infinite depths of Divine Order; never melt, even for an hour of happier inspiration, into the mystery of all-embracing good!

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But is not this pure Fatalism, and destructive to the moral being? To this question we must reply that, while destiny or fate in the sense of absolute external compulsion would certainly be destructive not only of moral responsibility, but of the personality itself, yet religion or science without fate, in another sense, is radically unsound. The word properly means "fixed, settled, irrevocably spoken;" that is, it notes the final truth and substance of things. To make it mean only hostile sovereignty — what is desperately bad, and rendered so by a dead, mechanical, motiveless, yet external power — is to misapply it. Rather should it signify what is impregnably certain; and if good is so, — things being regarded in their inherent and ultimate meaning, — then good, not evil, is fate. Is not truth itself, then, fate: — truth, which is but another name for the sanity and integrity of nature and law; truth, which is the health and sweetness of universal order; truth, which is therefore interchangeable, as to its meaning, with good? Why should not the very perfection of the moral and spiritual laws, whose benignity it is no part of our liberty of thought or will to alter or suppress, to make or to mar, stand to the soul as its fate? Subject as we surely are to organization, heredity, conditions innumerable, shall we not hold that the ideal *good* also, which we dream of *beyond* these limitations, is our ultimate destiny? We cannot separate perfection and fate. Deity, whose sway is not destiny, would not be venerable, nor even reliable. It would be a purpose that did not round the universe, a love that could not preserve it. Theism without fate is a kind of atheism. And a self-denominated atheism," yet holding justice to be the true necessity, or fate, is properly theism, though it refuse the name.

Relation to fate.

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Sovereign right and good at the centre of soul and nature, what is that but God?

So that destiny should not be defined as hostile sovereignty or suppressive decree. But we must go further. It cannot be pure outward force, compelling man, even to his good. Even worshipped as the dearest ideal, even cherished as the power of God to set aside human defect and guarantee the best, it would still abolish liberty, the substance of the soul, — if it were this. The impelling forces therefore represent not foreign mastery, but natural growth. God is the *inmost life* of the human, not the external will that shapes it as the potter moulds his clay. The fate that man must accept is but the real law of his own nature, whereby it is in accord with the universal life. It is thus not only consistent with freedom, but coincident with it. While he resists his own essential humanity, while he fails to express or to seek in his individual purpose that harmony with the universal order, his will can in no proper sense be called free: it is enslaved to illusion and bound to failure, and can reach nothing he really needs or can intelligently love. Liberty itself can be found only in knowing essential good to be the moving force of his own spiritual being. This unity is the true self; in this is personality; therefore it is spontaneity, joy, health, success. The fate that abolishes individual caprice is the seal of freedom. Hence the inspiration that comes in self-abandonment to an idea or a duty. It identifies our fate with our freedom. All great aspiration brings the sense of destiny, because it frees from inward conflict, from the resistance of finite caprice to infinite good; and in this deep natural alliance and harmony of forces the doubts and fears are dissolved.

Freedom reconciled with fate.

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Even in the less enlightened forms of personal energy, we note that the sense of destiny comes in, wherever there is unity of the motive powers, allowing entire concentration of purpose. This is the condition of valor, assurance, authority. The vivacious Norse Sagas are full of fatalism, and every storming Viking believed that his destiny was written in his brain at birth. "Odin," says the Heimskringla, "knew beforehand the predestined fate of men, or their not yet completed lot." "No soul can die unless by permission of God," says Mohammed in the Koran, for the encouragement of his followers. "Every man's fate have we bound about his neck." Better still, fate is the refuge and strength of Greek Prometheus in that sublime martyrdom which he endures as the penalty of his love for man. It is freedom and justice approaching in the future, to dethrone the tyrannical gods of the past. And this divine myth of the identity of fate with noble will is a normal type of all ethical and spiritual inspiration.

The heroes and the saints are fatalists, and read doom and triumph alike by one token: "for this cause came I unto this hour." The Stoic schools, both Greek and Roman, have proved that spiritual pantheism, as the essential unity of the human and divine, is reconcilable with the strongest conviction of moral freedom;[1] affirming in theory, and carrying out into actual life, a degree of personal independence and self-respect as remarkable as their confidence that fate and providence are one.[2] The pantheistic followers of the Bâb, a modern Persian heretic, have

[1] See Zeller's *Stoics*, pp. 170, 205, 227.

[2] *Stobæus Eclog.*, I. 179; *Seneca de Benef.*, IV. 7.

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met incessant persecutions of the most barbarous kind with astonishing courage and enthusiasm.[1]

And why should the fact be otherwise? Immanent deity, become intensely real for the consciousness, should not only consecrate the whole life to duty, but should give the powers that freedom of aspiration which a universe so consecrated cannot but guarantee to all its own natural and proper forces. "It is an error to suppose," says Heine, "that pantheism leads to indifference. On the contrary, the sense of his own divineness will stir man to reveal the same, and from that moment really grand actions and genuine heroism will enter and glorify this world."[2]

The life and death of the pantheistic Fichte were full of noble service, both patriotic and humane. Spinoza was the harbinger of free thought and scholarship, the Columbus of ethics and theology as well as of philosophy. The mystical "Friends of God" in the Middle Ages were the fathers of modern philanthropy: their "Theologia Germanica," Luther tells us, first brought him inward light and peace. From the spiritual closet of a pantheistic dream issued the Reformation. And every time the world is about to move a fresh step forward, there is somewhere in seclusion a mystical brooding sense of all-mastering and all-absorbing deity, that holds in its bosom the germinant religious and social revolution, and sends forth the earliest witnesses and purest martyrs in its cause.

Hindu Pantheism and the moral sense.

It must not, then, be supposed that Hindu Pantheism and Fatalism were wholly irreconcilable with moral earnestness, or even energy. I cannot admit, for instance, that Mr. Banerjea,

[1] See their history in De Gobineau's *Relig. de l'Asie Centrale.*

[2] *De l'Allemagne*, I. p. 103.

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a Hindu convert to Christianity, has furnished convincing proofs that the Vedânta, making the universe and the soul identical with God, destroyed the idea of duty. The same was said of Spinozism, by Jew and Christian. Yet Spinoza himself, cast out of the synagogue with curses as the sum of all wickedness, was, in morality, piety, and spiritual earnestness, far in advance of all his accusers, then or since. Moral purpose in the Hindu was apt to take inward, rather than outward, directions: this was incident to his ethnic and climatic conditions. But how large a degree of such purpose was involved in the effort to overcome self and the senses *by his method!* It was contemplative indeed, not social. He watched the flow of change as it swept through all forms, as one watches in reverie the waves of a running stream, or the drift of clouds across the sky; and the thought that he was himself but part of the current made him feel himself profoundly a child of fate. And he was fond of such sayings as these: —

"Life, death, wealth, wisdom, works, are measured for one while on his mother's bosom."

"Their fated allotments the very gods must bear. As pieces of drift-wood meet in ocean, and remain together a little time only; as a traveller sleeps under a tree, and the next day departs, — so friends and possessions pass: there is no return." [1]

"When his time is come, the bird who can see his food a long way off cannot see the snare."

"Birds are killed in the air; fishes caught in the sea: what help in choice of place?"

"When I see the sun and moon in eclipse, and the wise man in want, then I say, Fate is master." [2]

"Where are the princes of the earth with their chariots and armies? The earth that saw them perish still abides."

[1] *Ramâyâna.* [2] *Hitopadeśa*, I. 44-46.

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"Who sees not that this body passes away every moment? Like a pot of clay in the water, it falls in pieces."

"So many dear ties as man may form, so many thorns of sorrow are planted in his heart."

"Foolish is he who would lay up riches in a world that is like a bubble."

"As waters flow away and come not back, so the days and nights of mortal men."

"The society of the good, which brings us a little joy, is bound to the yoke of pain; for it ends in separation.

"And there is no healing for the heart that is wounded with this sword."[1]

But the inference shows that the wisdom to draw help from these necessities was not wanting.

"Therefore be thou resolved, and think no more of sorrowing: here is the healing for thy wounds."[2]

"Every thing on earth has its pleasure and its pain. Death comes to all that is born, and new birth to all that dies. Grieve not for what must be."[3]

And what was this intense feeling of the transient but equally intense suggestion of the eternal? Did not the lower fate point to a higher? If change sweeps over all, what makes the changes but a changeless law?[4] What makes a changeless law but an eternal life? Vicissitudes pass, God is. And we are, — *in God*. So, with all his moral energies, the devotee of contemplation strove to reach permanent peace, at the heart of a restless world.

The old lawgivers found no lack of moral sanction here.

[1] *Hitop.*, IV. 67–77 [2] Ibid., 82.
[3] *Ramâyâna; Bhag. Gitâ*, &c.
[4] "Anaxagoras, Epicurus, and Euripides agree that
——'nothing dies;
But different changes give their various forms.'"
Plutarch, *Sentim. of Nature.*

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"If one considers the whole universe as existing in the Supreme Spirit, how can he give his soul to sin?" [1]

"He who understands divine omnipresence can no more be led captive by crime." [2]

A Upanishad says: —

"Such a one, who beholds the soul in the infinite soul alone, him sin does not consume: he consumes sin; becomes free from doubt, and is pure." [3]

Trust.

The pantheistic bias of Hindu thought does not exclude a trustful and hopeful spirit. Through most Indian poetry there flows a delicate sense of divine benignity in the natural processes of life. The Hitopadeśa, the people's ancient Book of Precepts and Fables, whose choice sentences are gathered out of all the Hindu classics, says: —

"Hear the secret of the wise. Be not anxious for subsistence: it is provided by the Maker. When the child is born, the mother's breasts flow with milk. He who hath clothed the birds with their bright plumage will also feed thee."

"How should riches bring thee joy, which yield pain in the getting, and pain in the passing away, and turn the head of the winner with folly? What trouble so great, in this life of many cares, as the for ever unsatisfied desire? That only which one no longer seeks with anxious heart has he really attained." [4]

The Vedânta says: —

"As birds repair to a tree to dwell therein, so all this universe to the Supreme One." [5]

"He, the All-wise Preserver, dispenses the objects of our desire. To know Him is to be free: there is no end of misery but through this knowledge of God. To him whose trust is in God reveal themselves the mysteries." [6]

Says the Divine One in the Gitâ: —

[1] *Manu*, XII. 118.
[2] Ibid., VI. 74; so Spinoza.
[3] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 23.
[4] From Müller's version, I. 170–179.
[5] *Praśna*, IV. 7.
[6] *Śvetâśvatara*, VI. 13–23.

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"I am the Preserver who watches in all directions. Be not alarmed at having seen me in the terrible shape of all-destroying Time. Hasten to look, free from fear, on my human and friendly form." [1]

Another text, of frequent recurrence in the philosophical and ethical books, makes mortality itself the ground of spiritual faith: —

"From what root springs man, when felled by death? Say not, 'like a tree, he springs from seed.' If the tree be destroyed with its root, it grows not again. If then man be cut down by death, from what root shall he spring to life again? It is God, the highest aim of one who abideth in and knoweth Him." [2]

In the Ramâyâna, Bhârata is adjured by the sages not to mourn too bitterly for his dead father: —

"O wise Bhârata! grieve not for the departed. He is no longer an object for grief, and too many tears may bring him down from the heaven to which he has gone." [3]

And Arjuna, permitted to ascend, though living, to the heaven of the just,

"Follows the path unknown to mortals, where no golden sun nor silver moon divides the time, but the mighty hosts of men shine with the splendor of their own virtue, in a light which we afar off think to be the tremulous fires of stars.

"There sees he the good kings, the brave and faithful men who were blessed with glorious deaths, and holy prophets, and pure women in chariots that wing the heavenly spaces." [4]

In the absence of historical and biographical facts, we are obliged to infer the ethical ideal and attainment which Hindu civilization permitted, from the prevailing maxims and proverbs; the wisdom that has been circulating for ages, in sentence and in song, among the masses of this immense empire. Ethical illustrations.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xi.
[2] *Ramây.*, B. II.
[3] *Brihad*, III. ix. 28.
[4] *Mahâbh.*, III.

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Here, for example, is manly diet, from the Hitopadeśa, for the believer in fate: —

The Hitopadeśa.

"Twofold is the life we live in: fate and will together run:
Two wheels bear the chariot onward: will it move on only one?"

"Nay, but faint not, idly sighing, 'destiny is mightiest.'
Sesamum holds oil in plenty; but it yieldeth none unprest."[1]

"Fortune comes of herself to the lionlike man who acts. It is the abject who say, 'All must come from fate.' Forget fate, and be brave. If thou failest, having put forth all thy force, the blame is not thine.

"The deeds done in a former life are what is called fate. Therefore let one exert himself with unwearied energy in the present.

"As the potter shapes the clay at his will, so a man shapes his own action.

"Though he see his desired good close at hand, fate will not bestow it on him: it waits the manly deed.

"A work prospers through endeavors, not through vows: the fawn runs not into the mouth of a sleeping lion."[2]

"Take good and ill as they come; for fortune turneth like a wheel.

"Frogs to the marsh, birds to the lake, so all good to the man who strives for it: as one who seeks him, so hastes it to the hero who dallies not, is virtuous, grateful, and a faithful friend."[3]

"By his own doings one rises or falls, as one man digs a well and another throws up a wall."[4]

"Seek not the wild; sad heart! Thy passions haunt it.
Play hermit in thy house, with will undaunted.
A governed heart, thinking no thought but good,
Makes crowded houses holy solitude."

[1] *Hitopad. Introd.*, 29, 31. The verses are from *Arnold's* pleasant abridgment of this old *Book of Good Counsels* (Lond. 1861), and are literal translations. The prose passages are selected from *Müller's* German version (1844). I have also carefully compared with this the French version of *Lancereau* (1855) and the English by *Sir William Jones*. This last is hardly trustworthy, and Müller thinks it cannot have received the author's entire elaboration. Such liberties are taken by the native copyists of the Hitopadeśa, that, in Müller's opinion, no *true* edition is possible, and each translator must select the special text he will follow. This fact helps to explain the very marked difference in these versions.

[2] Ibid. *Introd.*, 30–35. [3] Ibid., I. 164–166. [4] Ibid., II. 45.

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"Thine own self, Bhârata, is the holy stream, whose shrine is virtue, whose water is truth, whose bank is character, whose waves are sympathy. There bathe, O Son of Pandu! Thy inward life is not by water made pure."[1]

"Better be silent than speak ill; better give up life than love harsh words; better beggar's fare than luxury at another's board."[2]

"Only that life is worth living which is free. If they live who depend on others, who are dead?"[3]

"He has all good things whose soul is content: the whole earth is spread with leather, for him whose own feet are well shod."

"He has read and heard and acquired all things, who turns his back on hope, and expects nothing."[4]

"Do not rage, like a cloud, with empty thunder: the noble man does not let the good or ill that foes have done him be seen."[5]

"What is a brave man's fatherland, and what a foreign country? Wherever he goes, his strength makes that land his own."[6]

"A bad man is like an earthen pot, easy to break and hard to mend. A good man is like a golden vase, hard to break and easy to mend."[7]

"Disposition is hard to overcome. If you make a dog a king, will he not still gnaw leather?"[8]

"A gem may be trodden under foot, and glass be put on the head: yet the glass is only glass, and the gem is still a gem."[9]

"How shall teaching help him who is without understanding? Can a mirror help the blind to see?"[10]

"It is to no purpose that the bad man says, I have read the Vedas and the Laws. His character rules him, as it is the property to milk to be sweet."[11]

"Wise men seek not things unattainable: grieve not over the lost, and stand firm in time of trouble."[12]

"In the poisoned tree of life grow two sweet fruits, — the enjoyment of the nectar of poetry and the society of noble men."[13]

"Integrity, self-sacrifice, valor, steadfastness through all changes, sympathy, loyalty, and truth are the virtues of a friend."[14]

From the *Mahâbh.*

[1] *Hitopadeśa*, IV. 83, 86.
[2] Ibid., I. 129.
[3] Ibid., II. 21.
[4] Ibid., I. 135, 137.
[5] Ibid., IV. 91.
[6] Ibid., I. 96.
[7] Ibid., I. 86.
[8] Ibid., III. 58.
[9] Ibid., II. 67.
[10] Ibid., III. 117.
[11] Ibid., I. 15.
[12] Ibid., I. 161.
[13] Ibid., I. 145.
[14] Ibid., I. 89.

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"By whom is this jewel created, this word of two syllables (Mitrâm, friend), wherein we pour the joy of love, which guards us from sorrow and foes and fear? A friend who gladdens the heart, sharing one's pleasure and pain, is hard to find. Friends in prosperity, self-seekers, abound; but misfortune is their touchstone."

"Be hospitable to thine enemy when he comes to thy door: the tree withdraws not its shade even from the wood-cutter.

"Good men are compassionate to the lowest beings. The moon refuses not its light to the hut of the Chandala.

"A guest who departs from a house disappointed, leaves his own sins behind him, and carries away the virtue of its owner.

"Even a low-born man who comes to a Brahman's house must be honored: the stranger is on the same footing with the gods."[2]

"He alone is to be praised, he is blest, from whom the weak and suppliant go not away with hopes destroyed."[3]

"The friendship of noble persons endures to the end of life; their anger is quickly appeased; their liberality is without self-interest."[4]

"Only the foolish ask, 'Is this one of us or an outside person?' To the noble the whole world is a family."[5]

"One should spare his neighbor, thinking of the pain one feels when he sees that he must die."

"O sacred earth! why dost thou endure the false man, who returns noble and trusting kindness with evil treatment?"[6]

"This life, which is like a wave trembling in the wind, is in a right cause to be sacrificed for the good of others."[7]

"Let the wise man give up his goods for the sake of his neighbor; for the sake of the good let him even give his life."[8]

"As life is dear to thee, so is it to other creatures: the good have mercy on all, as on themselves.

"He who regards another's wife as his mother, his wealth as vain, and all creatures as himself, is wise.

"Give to the poor, O son of Kunti! not to the rich. Medicine is for the sick, not for those that are well.

"The gift, bestowed with right purpose, at right time and place, on one who cannot repay it, is to be called a real gift."[9]

1 *Hitopadeśa*, I. 203, 204.
2 Ibid., I. 52–57.
3 Ibid., I. 183.
4 Ibid., I. 180.
5 Ibid., I. 64.
6 Ibid., I. 61, 73.
7 Ibid., III. 140.
8 Ibid., I. 38.
9 Ibid., I. 10–14.

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"Between virtues and the body there is infinite difference: the body perishes in a moment, virtues endure while the world lasts." [1]

"The wise will follow duty, as if death were already grasping his hair." [2]

The following are from the Panchatantra, a still older collection of tales and sentences, whose relation to the Hitopadeśa is not yet very clearly understood: — Pancha-tantra.

"In all actions, to be like one's self is the praise of the wise: this makes smooth the right path, so full of hindrance." [3]

"When the just falls, it is like a ball of feathers, but the wicked falls like a clod." [4]

"A noble person never fails in protecting others, even in his extreme need; as the pearl loses not its whiteness, though it have passed through the flames." [5]

"The storm blows down the strongest tree, if it stands alone; but not the well-rooted trees that stand together." [6]

"He who is kind to those that are kind to him does nothing great. To be good to the offender is what the wise call good." [7]

"A good prince is eye to the blind, friend to the friendless, father and mother of all who do well." [8]

"Where he is honored who is unworthy of honor, and he despised who deserves respect, there come three things, — famine, pestilence, and war." [9]

The fact that these popular "Books of Wisdom" are mainly of Buddhist origin [10] does not weaken their testimony to the union of practical morality with pantheistic sentiment. The Hindu masses who have rejected Buddhism as a system of negations cherish these manly maxims as the true philosophy of life. They are heard on the lips of the poorest people, and circulate freely through city and village. As in the

[1] *Hitopadeśa*, I. 43.
[2] Ibid., *Introd.*, 3.
[3] *Panchat.* (Benfey's German transl.) B. III.
[4] Ibid., II.
[5] Ibid. IV.
[6] Ibid., III.
[7] Ibid., IV. ix.
[8] Ibid., I. xii.
[9] Ibid., III. x.
[10] See Benfey, *Einleitung z. Panchatantra.*

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gnomic literature of other races, so here, the higher ethics are combined with maxims of prudential and even of selfish quality, though these last are very rare.[1] Plaints of poverty, and policies that secure success are quaintly mixed with admonitions on the brevity of life and the vanity of riches. And, as with Buddhist teaching generally, the inculcation of good will sometimes runs out into extravagant forms of self-sacrifice. These fables are in fact an honest picture of human life, and proverbs are not wanting which answer to every human quality represented therein. That those of sense and shrewdness should abound is but another proof that pantheism does not exclude practical capacities and aims.

Bhartrihari, a very ancient gnomic poet, whose "sentences" on human life and conduct are very popular in India, begins with the praise of love and beauty, and ends with the praise of devotion:—

"Wisdom is a treasure thieves cannot steal. It grows by spending, and it cannot pass away. The wise are the rich; and ye, O princes! will never become their equals."

"Without the wisdom that burns away our sins, the Vedas are nothing but men's trading wares."

"Virtue has no need of penances, nor a pure heart of washing in the Ganges, nor a true man of human protection, nor magnanimity of any ornament, nor the wise of any treasure but wisdom."

"Though thy efforts fail, be steadfast, and thou shalt be exalted. The torch thrown on the ground goes not out."

"He who has given himself to virtue, and felt the joy of obedience to duty, will give up life, but not his purpose."

"If the thistle has no leaves, is the spring to be blamed; or the sun, if bats fly not by day; or the cloud, if no drop of rain fall into

[1] The worst of these in the Hitopadeśa are suggested by the good mouse (B. I.)—purely for the purpose of testing the heroic professions of the king of the doves, who begs him to gnaw his subjects out of the net before himself, thus preferring their safety to his own. The selfish maxims are promptly rejected, and answered by others of the opposite quality: whereat the mouse praises this wisdom of self-sacrifice as worthy of a king.

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the cuckoo's beak? So blame not fate: not so wilt thou change its path."

"Go not aside from wisdom: then shall fire become as water, and the sea as a well; Meru shall be as a hillock, and the lion as a gazelle; poison shall be sweet as nectar, and serpents a crown of flowers."

"As shadows in the morning is friendship with the wicked: hour by hour it wanes. But friendship with the good grows like the shadows of eve, till life's sun shall have set."

"The drop of rain falls on glowing iron, and is no more. It falls on a flower, and shines like a pearl. It sinks into a shell at the happy hour, and becomes the pearl itself. Such the difference between kinds of friendship among men."

"To do good in secret, to conceal one's good act, to help the poor when he comes, to be moderate in prosperity, always to speak kindly, is the path of wisdom." [1]

I add a few selections of similar ethical purport from other popular Hindu writings:—

"In thy passage over this earth, where the paths are now low, now high, and the true way seldom distinguished, thy steps must needs be unequal; but fidelity to thyself will bear thee right onward." [2]

"Let thy motive lie in the act, not in the reward. Having subdued thy passions, do thy own work, unconcerned for the result. Then shalt thou stand untainted in the world, as the lotus-leaf lies on the waters unwet." [3]

The Mahâbhârata says of Arjuna that—

"Neither lust nor fear nor love could tempt him to transgress his duty, or to do evil:"—

and Râma in the Ramâyâna that—

"As birds are made to fly and rivers to run, so the soul to follow duty."

"As the fragrance of a blossoming tree spreads far, so the fragrance of a pure action." [4]

[1] *Bhartr.* (Von Bohlen's Latin vers.) I. 13; III. 72; I. 45, 75; II. 100; I. 89, 78, 50, 57.
[2] *Śakuntalâ.* [3] *Bhagavad-Gitâ.* [4] *Mahânârâyana Upan.*, II.

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"As the stars disappear, so fades the memory of a kindness out of an evil heart."[1]

"Our senses are like lattices, at which the deities keep watch. And if the soul unconsciously leaves them open to the poisonous air of temptation, sincere prayer to these heavenly guardians will save the precious light."

"How can he who loves all men be torn by affliction? Or he who hates be free from terror? or the voluptuary from misery? How can he fail who acts wisely? How can he be happy who murmurs at Providence? Who can be glorious without virtue? who truly dishonored without blame? And how without justice shall the kingdom stand?"[2]

"He who lives pure in thought, free from malice, contented, leading a holy life, feeling tenderness for all creatures, speaking wisely and kindly, humble and sincere, has Vasudeva (Vishnu) ever in his heart. The Eternal makes not his abode within the heart of that man who covets another's wealth; who injures living creatures; who speaks harshness or untruth; who is proud of his iniquity; whose mind is evil."[3]

"Men are ever seeking, never attaining, bliss. They die thirsting. The whole world is suffering under triple affliction. Why should I hate beings who are objects for compassion? why cherish malignity towards those who are more prosperous than myself? I should rather sympathize with their happiness. For to suppress unkind feelings is itself a reward."[4]

"It is the duty of the good man, even in the moment of his destruction, not only to forgive, but to seek to bless his destroyer, even as the sandal-tree sheds perfume on the axe that fells it."[5]

"Heaven's gate opens to the good without a gift: the gate shut fast to the wicked, though he bring hundred-fold offerings.

"Put a thousand horses in the scale, yet shall virtue be the heavier weight.

"The sweet scent of flowers is lost on the breeze, but the fragrance of virtue endures for ever.

"Whatever men do of good or evil, they shall reap the fruit in due season.

"The foolish, like a child, knows not if things grow better or worse; and while, drawn by the roses, he lets the orchard go, he will mourn over the fading flower, and lose the golden fruit."[6]

[1] *Hindu Play* (Wilson). [2] *Ramâyâna.* [3] *Vishnu Purâna*, III. vii.
[4] *Vishnu Purâna*, I. xvii. [5] Halhed's *Gentoo Code*. [6] *Ramâyâna.*

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And so we may judge whether Manu is not justified in claiming what he does for the religion of his race. "Of all duties the first is to know the Supreme. It is the most exalted science, and assures immortal life. For in the knowledge and adoration of God, which the Veda teaches, all rules of good conduct are comprised." "Wisdom," says the Hitopadeśa, "is the highest good of man; for it cannot be sold nor taken from him, nor can it ever die. He who hath it not, the destroyer of doubt, the mirror of the unseen, the eye of all, is blind." [1]

The intuition of life as one.

The belief that the substance of life is one and divine has its forms in all ages, — recognitions, more or less enlightened, of a constant spiritual fact; to which thought is again and again remanded, under broader and clearer aspects, as man advances to new forms of culture. And this better knowledge comes mainly from doing justice to the balancing fact of difference, or individuality.

In the Hindu mystic, a child of religious instinct and dream, the unity of life was an exclusive consciousness, an all-absorbing wonder and delight. For the religious sentiment of itself is not analytic, but integrative; absorbed in what it loves, it sees not parts, but wholes; it dissolves antagonisms and distinctions, just as it does doubts or fears, in its own fervent heat. While the understanding is undeveloped, this mystic sense of oneness is of course blind to the capabilities of life, and the meaning of its relations. As in Brahmanism, it even helps to eternize social wrongs; either ignoring them as illusion, or else accepting them as elements of a divine order, and reconciling them in its all-dissolving dream.

[1] *Hitop., Introd.*, 4, 9.

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Yet this dream is divination also of a central truth, whose practical and social meaning grows with progress, and appears in the latest science and faith.

For these are really the goal involved in that mystic point of departure, that intuitive ideal of the unity of life. The course of history justifies and reaffirms it on a broader plane, having at last developed its human values. We can here but sketch this process.

Its historical evolution.

In the Oriental philosophies, unity is for the most part a religious abstraction, an ideal of contemplation. But with Greek and Roman the understanding comes to its rights. The individual asserts his validity. The human and finite are marked off, as against the infinite, and studied, in and for themselves. And in this polarity or antagonism come liberty and progress. Man recognizes his own regulated powers to be the path to truth, beauty, good. It is no longer the unlimited, but *limit*, that is divine. What Kapila and his Sânkhya reaction on Vedantism showed in germ thus reaches maturer expression under more favoring skies, in more energetic races. Here all is relation, contrast, difference.

With the Greek comes the triumph of dialectics, the clear analysis of ideas and principles, the keenest sense of individual purpose. With the Greek appears duality of matter and mind; also of matter and number. Pythagoras determines the harmonious relations of finite things. Xenophanes, who pronounced unity to be the ultimate fact, as distinctly as the Vedantists, and who recognized the illusion of the phenomenal world as fully, yet not the less insisted that all visible things should be studied, and had his own natural history of their origin and development. So the Ionian cities first thoroughly distinguished politics

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from theocracy; and Greek life emancipated government, making it a separate independent science. And the first great step was taken towards freeing men from religious bondage when Xenophanes pointed out the fact that they made their own gods.

"The gods have not given every thing to man. It is man who has ameliorated his own destiny."

The Prometheus of Æschylus, resisting Jove for the sake of mankind, and predicting his downfall at the hands of the son of a mortal woman, illustrates the same protest of the human, against an overwhelming sense of infinity. Taine has admirably pointed out this quality of the Greek mind. "The Greeks have no sentiment of this infinite universe, in which a generation of people is but an atom in time and place. Eternity does not set up before them its pyramid of myriads of ages. The universal escapes them, or at least half occupies them, or remains in the background in their religion."[1] In Rome, on the other hand, the universal was everywhere pursued, yet always in concrete and human forms, — as political organization, as jurisprudence, as world-wide sway.

Even in Greece and Rome, however, we still find the religious sentiment to be, on the whole, inclusive of all human spheres and functions. It gives man and nature their meaning for art, science, philosophy, domestic, social, municipal life; so that there is still a sense in which life might make the impression of a divine unity. But the process advances.

Aristotle has defined; analyzing man and nature as he could. Bacon goes further; plots the sciences on a map, and marks the regions yet to be filled. Men botanize, dissect, unroll the earth's pages, loose the

[1] *Art in Greece*, p. 38.

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bands of Orion, and resolve the galaxy into myriads of worlds. It is telescope and calculus, instruments of analysis, that are divine. We learn the mechanics of religion, politics, commerce, art. Men search out the cunning workmanship of the universe. They are all eye to detect *how it was contrived* by a Being who plans, devises, manipulates, constructs like themselves. In this inspection of definite processes the immanence of the infinite gradually recedes from thought, and religion enters the phase of a more or less external deism, oscillating between the Paleys and Voltaires; knowing God only as a manipulator of materials provided for him from without, just as one knows an architect by the style of his house, or a watch-maker by his watch. It is not strange that analytic science, elated by its discoveries in this realm of definable relations and palpable mechanism, and inattentive to the infinite substance that must condition all phenomena, should concentrate its homage at last on the processes by which it achieves its triumph. Analysis, in fact, by its own function of taking the world to pieces, instead of receiving the impression of its unity and integrity, is reduced to holding this critical process as the essential thing, the vital fact of the universe. Mind and nature become in its theory simply objective material for testing and reducing, mere *hylic* mass for manipulation by its forces; whether to afford them discipline, or to give scope to their energies, or to reflect their praise.

This merely analytic process is quite incompetent to reveal truth in the form of *life*. To dissect its objects, it must *destroy* them. It slays that beautiful unity of functions and relations, in which life is mysteriously shrined. In the heap of dead fibres and organs, on

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which it has operated, and which it displays in their mere outward mechanism, what resemblance is there to the living, breathing, inspired body? What resemblance to the former life can you get by putting them together again? Phosphorus in the growing grain is food for human brains: extract this phosphorus by chemical process, and it is poison. Being must be seen in its natural and vital relations, *in its integrity*, or it is not seen at all. Under the power of mere analysis, science would become pure autopsy, and nature have no informing soul.

The genius of scientific and practical races has therefore not been without its tendencies to transform the living universe — which for the contemplative spirit is thrilling with a mystic divine pulsation, and which Plato even called a living creature — into a well-devised machine. Their vast capacities, under the lead of analysis, have developed its definable uses, rather than felt the mystery of its life. As one after another they have unfolded its flowing activities, its unfathomed forces, they have seemed to claim these by right of creation quite as much as by that of discovery; to throw off the Infinite as a separable element, and then refuse it all place in the triumph of the very powers which it conditions and supplies; writing on each freshly won field, "God is not here, but, *if anywhere*, behind and beyond;" insisting all the time, observe, that the idea of God as a distinct external power is the *only* idea of God, being that which *analysis* must report. Their physical science goes further still, and in its search for physical origins of life has often quite overlooked the substance for the processes of nature, and mistaken the mechanism of life for its explanation and cause.

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Through mature science.

But science cannot penetrate far on her divine path without discerning that it *is* divine. Science has no commission to take the mystery out of nature, to exorcise from its laws the life that preserves them from being fathomed by progressive thought, or marred by imperfect will. So much is clearly discerned by the broadest scientific minds of the day.

Science solves no problem but by recognizing another and more interior, disclosed by the solution itself, as a flower within its opening sheath. The freest explorers of nature not only see most clearly the unity of the universe, tracing its laws through their relations to each other and to the whole, but also the *infinitude of these relations*, inexhaustible for every atomic fact. Not less is the unity of life revealed in the wonderful gradations of its forms; in the comprehension of all lower stages within all higher ones; and in endless subtle affinities, transitions, transformations, that forbid absolute lines of separation between these stages of ascent. And the whole drift of modern science is towards the recognition of what has been described by one of its ablest exponents as "one harmonious action, underlying the whole of nature, organic and inorganic, cosmical, physical, chemical, terrestrial, vital, and social."[1]

Yet this unity is, it must also be observed, of a purely transcendental kind. It is not explicable, or even expressible, by the processes of science, which can but trace the order of phenomena, and must therefore confess herein the immanence of the infinite throughout its fields of research. Science, then, must inevitably bring fresh tributes to mystic contemplation, and reconcile liberty and knowledge with that

[1] Mivart, *Genesis of Species*, p. 239.

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old eternal longing of the soul for the unfathomable One.

Of this whole process, miracle is of course the intolerable negation. If it were possible for the notion that the course of natural law can be violated or suspended to hold its ground, it would utterly abolish the power of science to reveal immanent deity, and even the idea of deity as infinite intelligence. Logically, there could be no science, and no religion; only observations of phenomena that point to no universal or reliable basis of belief. How could these observations really reveal One who may contradict them to-morrow? But such contempt of nature and distrust of its orderly laws is not properly Aryan. With races of this stock science hastens to fulfil its religious function. The Semitic mind also has learned to greet this form of revelation as freely as the Aryan.

Through rejection of miracles.

Oriental faith in miracles knew no bounds. But miracle was as universal in the East as law with us, and so that stupendous mythology had meaning for the religious sentiment. There was no vain distinction made between *miraculous* and *natural* revelation; but the whole actual or possible of nature and life was, as it were, insphered in deity. In a child's wonder at all he sees, special wonder-working counts for no more than plain nature.

The scientific conception of invariable law comes, then, not to destroy this divine dream that the universe is in God, so dear to contemplative minds in every age, but to interpret and fulfil it. Man has been learning to reconcile freedom, even in deity, with orderly and unchanging ways, and to clear his own ideal of perfection from every element

The mission of science.

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of exclusiveness or divided power. He has been learning that the closest study of mind and nature does not free him from the conviction that infinite intelligence is the inmost ground of finite, but confirms it by all the certainties of law. The mystic faith which, while yet an infantile instinct, sang of Brahma as the All, and of the world of forms as his divine play, has thus permanent meaning for man; and all its phases in history have been pointing beyond themselves to a maturity which only science could bring. Clothed in new knowledge as in new names; interpreted by things natural and practical, and giving these a sublime reach of relation and promise; set to largest social uses, and inspiring them with universality, identifying religion with the free growth of every human faculty, with labor and with life, and so emancipating it from dependence on mediator or miracle, — this mystic faith in the oneness of God and man reappears at last as a freedom and intelligence, which neither distinctive Brahmanism, Judaism, nor Christianity could express.

Spiritual relations of science.

I perceive no power either in the friends or foes of science to resolve it into spiritual negation. It can neither become the slave of superstition nor the bar to sentiment and ideal vision. It refuses to be ruled by the hostile supernaturalist, who imagines that a development theory must involve atheism. It must no less distinctly decline the proposal of the student of nature to banish, in the name of law itself, "what we call spirit and spontaneity," from human thought.[1]

For a law, physical or psychological, is no mere automatic machinery. It is a *mode of action*, so

[1] Huxley on *Physical Basis of Life*.

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orderly, so harmoniously related to other laws, so expressive of what we most reverence in thought, that to divorce it from mind would be to refuse belief in the ideal forms of those attributes which most dignify mind; those highest functions to which intelligence, as we find it in ourselves, clearly points upward. Instead of being apart from mind, the constancy of natural law implies an inseparable mental force, none the less real because without the limitations which human intelligence involves. Its universality does not make it the less, but the more divine. A man may make wheels, springs, and levers his agents, and withdraw; for inertia and weight do not depend on his fingers, and the machine will get on for a while without his aid. But deity cannot leave the laws of the universe to work alone, since they are simply forms of divine energy; the activity of the law being nothing else than the instant energy of immanent mind. That this energy transcends all we experience as personal consciousness does not alter the fact that it is a form of mind.

What serves it to remand this wisdom and power to a distinct sphere, and lay it quietly aside as "The Unknowable"? How indeed can that be unknowable of which we know that it exists, and of which, if we are to allow ourselves competent to science in any form, the very meaning for us is constant self-manifestation in phenomena?

The mind and heart of man still fail not to entertain the never solved, yet never wholly unanswered questions which a secret intuitive assurance will not suffer him to dismiss.

What is this instant intelligence whereby the universe becomes unity and order and growth? What

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harmonizes nature and man? What brings the atoms together each moment to form the coherent globe, and yet holds them at the same moment apart, so that two shall never touch? What lifts each separate billow of the sea, yet binds it to obey the tidal swell?

Discussion as to which is the one great force in material atoms, attraction or self-repulsion; or whether all things come to pass through action and reaction of the two, — makes no difference to our questions, which go deeper.

What is that in conscience which is so at one with gravitation and affinity and light? What mysterious sway makes recollection and hope, past and future, alike our servants? What directs the remedial retributions, silent and sure, to bring us back to nature and right?

What is that most minute attention which guards the pulsations of the heart; keeps thought, affection, will, coherent and untroubled; buoying up individual existence on the unfathomed sea? And what makes the deep that brought us hither, and into which we return, to be in all its mystery a home into whose care we entrust what is dearest to us with such wondrous calmness?

Questions these as old as mind and heart, earlier than the study of natural laws, and not set aside thereby. And what of the answer? Was it only because he had so little knowledge of the definite processes, the delicate distinctions which science reveals, that the Hindu, pondering over these mysteries, solved all questions by pronouncing the one word *Adhyátma*, — Over-soul? Was it his ignorance that spirit and spontaneity must be dismissed, upon the discovery of law, that prompted the answer, "Mind is all"? Yet

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it would appear that our science of invariable harmonious law itself can give no other answer; and we must still demand what invisible life is plying at this seamless warp and woof of "evolution," "natural selection," "metamorphosis." Is it we individually, we collectively, who do it, — we who can neither make nor mar one of these laws, and who advance only by accepting and rightly using them according to laws of reason and love? Is it, as some dream, spirits wiser than we, a hierarchy of diviner insights and powers? We gain not a step by such ascent, towards reaching the constitutive force of law. Spirits themselves are not less truly expressions of this force in their mental energies, for being also free, productive, personal. Their spontaneity itself rests on this mystery of orderly law, like the movements of atoms and of suns. Morality is personal liberty; but it is no less the movement of immutable law, transcending the individual, while it lifts him into the freedom and strength which belong to universal truth.

We call the intelligence, of which universal law is the movement, God. But in reality we have no name for it, because no name can cover the whole. Law, Life, Love, Unity, Fatherhood, Brotherhood, this religion, that religion, all are waves of the One Divine Sea.

None of these syllables have quite expressed the truth that is found only in the whole. They yield but fragments of a sense that was never sounded, of a growth that cannot end.

The Vedantic worship of One Life in all was darkened by idolatry of tradition and of caste. Escape from limitations. Yet it should be noted that caste and tradition were held to be steps only, to higher unity of being

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which should dissolve them away. After all, the relations of the devotee with his ideal of the Supreme were felt to be personal and direct: *his own* sacrifice, his own disciplines, not another's, were relied on to make his illusions vanish and reality appear.

All special religions have, in like manner, presented obstacles of their own to that free recognition of the infinite which they sought. Especially is this true of their pretensions to supernatural revelation, which science is so thoroughly setting aside in the name of law. In the lower stages of culture, supernaturalism is indeed a reaching forth to find God: it means that there is at least a divineness in things exceptional or wonderful, for those who have not yet learned what sacredness there is in things familiar and near. It is, primarily then, a form of spiritual progress, and satisfies real needs. But, when prolonged into scientific ages and enlightened races, claims of this kind practically teach that God is not in man, in nature, in history; but *out* of man, *against* nature, *behind* history; entering the world once on a time, with what men are expected to receive as truer than truth, more legislative than law, more loving than love. They teach that spirit is to be held the more divine for secluding itself in the prescriptive claim of one or of a few. They teach that the infinite is the better recognized for confining its manifestation to a class, an epoch, an individual life. All this limitation of universal forces, this prescription of divine paths, this foreclosure of inspiration, the liberty of our day holds to be no better than sarcophagus or shroud. It will choose rather that pantheism of the Spirit that finds God instant and informing in all history, experience, law, and work. What Eastern

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contemplation could foreshadow, Western vigor and grasp of things will have to deliver out of its limitations, old and new, by bringing the unities of races and sciences and faiths, to serve, now that *their* day too has come, this eternal desire of the soul.

Never can man, with whatsoever motive, even in theory separate himself from God. Theology has vainly attempted it, under promptings of fear and self-contempt. Even the noble sentiment of humility has been pressed by a sense of imperfection and inward evil, to the point of imagining a gulf positively separating the divine from the human. It has thus attempted what would divide deity itself, and abolish at once both human and divine. This also was in vain.

It is the virtue of modern culture, intellectual and moral, that it educates man in self-respect; so that he shall no longer think himself bound to deny the validity of his own nature, in order to affirm the reality of the divine. It does not hesitate to assure him that it is only where he finds his own real being that he is finding God.

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V.

INCARNATION.

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INCARNATION.

THE literal meaning of Incarnation is that deity assumes a material body, in order to be clearly recognized as present in the actual world. Substantially, the belief implies a profounder truth, which its various forms imperfectly express; — that Life is in its inmost sense one with God. It is essential to the religious sentiment, and has as many forms as there are religions in the world. God must be not abstraction, but life. Somehow the world must manifest the Highest Spirit. Philosophy affirms that it must be so, by the very nature of being, notwithstanding the conditions of relativity and imperfect vision under which we must behold this manifestation. The heart pleads that it is surely so, because God loves us, and nothing will satisfy this love but to take our nature, that he may be among us as a friend. The disciples of every positive religion insist that it *has* been so, in this or that exalted personage who has appeared, to found a faith. The devout thinker says: It is so, now and always; for what *is* God but the life of the universe, as of the soul?

Universality of the idea.

No race of men, in other words, is satisfied to think of the world as separate from ideal good. And every religion devises some special way of bringing the one into the other, even though it may overlook or deny

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some completer way; because all instinctively divine that the two are essentially one. Of course the form chosen is noble or otherwise, according to the character of the civilization; but the endeavor is not anywhere wanting. Even where little inspiration or faith is left, religions throw themselves back upon past ideals, which are believed to have exhausted the sources of truth. And this idolatry becomes the more anxious and jealous, the feebler the faith in revelation through living consciousness and present opportunity. The manifold superstition that hastens to call itself "inspirational" proves at least the need of being somehow assured of a divine presence. Lacking the heavenly form, men will grub within the earth for substitutes. Nor is there any creature so insignificant, down to beetle and worm, but it has been somewhere supposed to guest a god. And if science delights to discover the forces of gravitation and repulsion in every atom, and the mysterious dynamics of life in every organic molecule, may not the religious instinct well have sought to greet the divinity in every form of being from the loftiest to the least?

Incarnation in man.

The highest type of the idea is of course that of incarnation in Man; and this also is not exclusively revealed to any race, nor in any person. It is human, as is also the faith that deity is in sympathy with man, and uplifts him through experience of his needs and desires.

Of this assurance how various the forms in human history, all more or less imperfect expressions of the idea. For the Hindu, it was God manifest in the Brahman, or divinely absorbed man; for the Hebrew and Mohammedan, in the prophetic man; for the Greek, in the Delphic man or woman, oracular

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and ecstatic; for the Celt, in the Druid man or woman; for the modern Persian mystic, in the Bâb, or man who represents the open "gate" of God; for the Christian, in the Christ, or man supposed to have been the one only possible Form of God, or else exclusively "anointed" to be the central life of humanity, or nucleus of its faith in God. Then for the Roman Catholic, to meet the needs of that great organization which had followed logically on the submission of mankind to this central Christ, it was inevitably the papal man.

But there are far broader and more spiritual forms than any of these, — into which the idea of incarnation is now steadily advancing. God becomes incarnate through the eternal principles that underlie the *conscience* and the *affections* of man; in his reason and his faith; organized into character as intellectual light and noble love. And again God is incarnate in the *social* man, in humanity itself, developed at once in the individual and in the race, as is possible only through the free intermingling and mutual balance of all human elements, and inspiring institutions with those principles of personal freedom and moral order by which the human becomes one with the divine. We are henceforth to find this unity in actual life; in wise, productive labor of brain and hand; in an integral culture of the individual and the race, instead of reading it as a tradition of the past, veiled behind mythology and philosophy, as an idealization or a divine dream. For all the lofty sentences of Eastern wisdom do not tell us how far men lived according to the best; and it would also seem that the more the New Testament is studied in a genuine spirit of historical research, the less can be affirmed with certainty about

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that personal life which Christians have been taught to adore.

But everywhere in some form recurs the assurance that God is manifest in man. Ever since man, made in the divine image, came to conscious spiritual life, he has felt the necessity to find his nature indeed divine; to behold deity in it, transfiguring its outward part in the shimmer of miracle, or else its inward and spiritual part, and thence the body and its uses, in the real splendor of truth and love. The aspiration never dies out of the soul, because God and the soul are essentially one.

And this, which Oriental instinct divined, was recognized in many noble ways, not only in its relation to the desire of progress, but as balance to the sense of moral evil and spiritual need.

Aryan incarnation.

Emile Burnouf[1] thinks that incarnation in the complete sense is pre-eminently an Aryan belief; that it is easier for an Aryan to conceive God as incarnated in man than to conceive prophetic inspiration in the Hebrew sense.[2] This is but to say that the Aryan religious sentiment is pantheistic. And the statement is true. There is a breadth and absoluteness in its conception of the unity of all truth, which is not satisfied with leaving man outside divinity, the mere recipient of gifts from a source apart from his nature. The divine desire in the soul implies the divinity of the soul. The object of worship is more than object: it pre-existed in the worshipper, and prompted the aim and the prayer. The yearnings

[1] *Art. on the Science of Religions*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

[2] As an illustration may be mentioned the Persian sect of Bâbists, already referred to, which has spread over a large portion of Persia, and, like Sufism, engrafted upon Islamite theism a pantheistic faith. See Gobineau, p. 477.

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of the spirit are more than a sense of need: they are the strength of an inward ideal seeking its own. And the perception of this truth is eminently Aryan. The tendency of Indo-European philosophy to identify subject and object in the processes of existence is but the *speculative* form of a profound instinct in this race, which demands that culture shall express by its freedom and fulness the essential unity of the human with the divine.

Burnouf fails to appreciate this philosophical scope of the fact he has attempted to state, when he ventures to infer from it that the dogma of the *divinity of Jesus* will stand permanently for all Aryan races as a truth of positive religion. It is mainly from *Aryan* idealization indeed that the dogma in question has proceeded. Jesus himself was of *Semitic* descent: the earliest records of his life are of similar origin, and form no exception to the instinctive reluctance of the Semite to ascribe pure deity to the human. To effect this, they required to be clothed in purely Aryan conceptions from Greek and Oriental sources. And they were in fact so transformed, in the Christian consciousness. The ideal demand thus proved itself independent of specific historical or biographical truth. But the fact that it has been so at last becomes manifest, by the progress of inquiry, to all; and then the *absoluteness* of this special personal symbol can no longer be maintained. It was provisional and temporary; representing one stage only in the development of that Aryan demand for incarnation in man, which passes on to broader levels and maturer sight.[1]

[1] This is fully recognized even in Bâbism, which Gobineau describes (p. 326) as definitely affirming that God has not willed humanity to believe that revelation had reached its limit, or that its *own* revelation was shut up within a single personage.

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Incarnation as Saviour.

Of all personal incarnation that which man has most loved in all ages is God manifest *as Saviour;* and it has as many forms as there are stages and epochs in his comprehension of his own spiritual and moral needs.

The Christian belief that God was incarnated *once for all* for this purpose, undoubtedly contained, in its earnestness and concentrative power, the germs of broader and maturer conceptions than itself. These have always been apparent in efforts, more or less successful, to escape the limitations which as *dogma* it affirms. The time has come when these efforts have learned their own significance, and resulted in an idea of incarnation, consistent with Universal Religion.

To all such exclusive forms of the idea succeeds the nobler faith that incarnation is the permanent fact of human nature, and comes into special view wherever beautiful and beneficent lives are lived, or thought is uttered, in earnest accord with its universal laws; and that the "saving" power, which is neither more nor less than the educating, humanizing power, and coincident with culture, is, as power of God, one and the same thing in them all. Whenever any part of the world, spiritual or material, is redeemed to its natural and so divine uses, there God, as man, becomes Saviour. And who shall fathom how much of this there has been in past human lives, or how much there is in present ones?

The conception of this movement comes to absorb into its unity, one by one, the manifold stages of human progress; and we apprehend deity as manifest in each age under such forms as its knowledge of life and nature have enabled it to recognize.

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In periods when a sense of degeneracy inevitably possessed men, and they turned their faces backward to find golden ages in the past, because there was as yet no foothold for practical construction through the intercourse of energetic races; when the outward world therefore repelled them as illusion, and refuge in the inward became a necessity, — it is refreshing to find the belief that deity becomes manifest as deliverer *whenever man's needs require, or his aspirations and devotions enter the ever open door of a mystic union with omnipotence.* The Hindu ideal.

This instant access to the best was not through all sainthood and heroism only, as these were then conceived by the traditional ideal. In the oneness of all life, Hindu faith beheld everywhere the Supreme sacrificing himself for all;[1] "through devotion" taking on himself the whole possibility of human misery and want. Brahmâ is in the form of every element, every creature. He is their unity, and it is his sacrifice that consecrates them all. Its universal elements.

It was a redeeming element of Hindu caste itself, that it constituted every saint an incarnation of Brahmâ for the preservation of the world, in virtue of his fulfilment of the ideal of sainthood. This equal opportunity, even within the limits of a hereditary class, was at least the recognition that fresh access to union with deity by discipline and faith could never be wholly foreclosed. Nor was any past form of sainthood regarded as in permanent possession either of supreme and final virtue, or of invincible authority. Its throne was held provisionally, and liable to pass to a stronger master in the sphere of "devotion."

[1] See Śankara's *Commentary on the Brihad Upan.*, where the Brâhmana is quoted at length.

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This democratic element in Brahmanical holiness has already attracted our interest. Under favoring circumstances, it would have reconciled incarnation with liberty and progress. Although such instincts of growth had little practical opportunity, and cannot here receive the living meaning which a more energetic civilization would put into them, they were nevertheless not wholly a dream. Their influence is traceable through the whole course of Hindu religious history.

The moral defects of an unrestrained play of the idea of incarnation, in races and ages of imperfect culture, are obvious. And, on the other hand, the very limitations of this idea in the Christian consciousness, its confinement to a single historic form, severely simple and ethically noble, has been temporarily of great service in sobering the sensuous imagination and guiding the moral sentiment of mankind. Christian mythology, cautious and tame beside Hindu, is proportionately purer. The virtue of a mythology, however, considered as play of the religious imagination, lies not only in ethical purity, but in freedom and scope also. Full justice to the religious nature of man will recognize both these sides, and find germs of permanent service in both.

Breadth of human relation.

As representing the freedom of deity to assume living forms of manifestation, Christian mythology is certainly tame beside that of India. Its Virgin conceives her Child through the miraculous overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. But the wives of Daśaratha in the Râmâyana conceive and bear sons who are gods, simply by eating sacrificial food. And Sitâ, who is the celestial Lakshmi in human form, arises from the Earth in a silver vessel turned up by

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the plough in clearing a place for sacrifice; for Sitâ is the *furrow*, and her worship as wife of Râma, the incarnate preserver, divinizes the bounteous earth and the labors that redeem it; as her separation from him, and disappearance in the arms of the earth itself, amidst a divine flame that issues from the cloven ground, expresses the sowing and death of the seed. In similar recognition of physical uses, the gods churn the sea of milk, throwing into it every kind of medicinal plant that grows; and out of the *amrita* or immortal food that comes of this divine toil ascend goddesses that bless mankind.

Oriental civilization being based on the family, we are prepared to find much of the incarnation-lore of India centering in the functions and destinies of kindred. These may, in fact, almost be said to constitute its tragedy and triumph, in epos and drama and sacred song. Strife and reconciliation, duty and sacrifice, penalty and reward, find their divine expression in the idealization of these simple relations. And Kâlidâsa, with entire simplicity, describes the four sons of Raghu shining by division of their father's being, as justice, use, redemption, and love descended from heaven to become incarnate in four human lives.[1]

Vishnu as Saviour; Rama.

Râma, as incarnation of Vishnu for human deliverance from evil, is hailed by aged saints, who die gladly when their eyes have seen the long expected One.[2] He supplants all the older gods, who pour on their heads the dust that is under his feet. He absorbs all their powers into himself; but it is because *he represents all functions and demands of life*. He passes through every phase of the Hindu sense of personal duty. He fulfils every relation recognized in the

[1] *Raghuvansa*, X. [2] *Râmây.*, III.

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Oriental ideal of service and of command, assuming in succession the three stages of student, married, and hermit life. He suffers all injustice, even to complete deprivation of his natural rights. He condescends to wear the bark dress, and to dig roots with a spade, though born to a throne; and this through obedience to filial love and duty, that a father's word might not be made void. His conviction is his life and strength and immortality. He brings out by his self-sacrifice a soul of tenderness and magnanimity in his relatives; "overcomes mankind by fidelity, Brahmans by generosity, preceptors by his attention to duties, and all enemies by the sword and bow." His forgiveness of injury is not less perfect than his power to punish it. He pays funeral honors to his bitterest foe. He cherishes no anger against the false queen who has deprived him of his crown, driven him into exile, and brought his father to untimely death. He even seeks excuses for her, and commends her to the care of his brother, on whom she has forced the crown that belonged of right to himself. One who mourned excessively for a lost brother he admonishes thus:—

"Man must not be carried away by grief, but hasten to a better mind. Thou hast shed tears: it is enough. Necessity is lord of the world. But let man never forget the good on which he should fix his eyes; for fate embraces in its movement duty, use, and joy. We have given what we ought to grief: now let us do what is becoming."

His virtues are exaggerations, and conformed to Oriental ideals and motives; but, whatever its faults, we must note, as the special nobility of this poetic incarnation, which enters profoundly into the popular faith, its effort to embody the whole duty, at once of

[1] *Râmây.*, IV.

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a king, a husband, a son, a brother, a hero, a saint, a deliverer of mankind from moral evil. He is adored as "protector of the defenceless, extending mercy to the oppressed."[1] Even his foe, whom he is obliged to slay, commits his son to his care in perfect trust, at death.[2] When counselled to obtain the throne by treachery, he replies: —

"Far from me as poison be a gain, even were it of the throne of heaven, which is obtained by the iniquity of destroying a friend."

A victor over his enemies by his superhuman powers, he generously ascribes his success to his companions in arms.

Râma's absolute sacrifice of his own interests to his father's authority is an exaltation of the patriarchal ideal above the Brahmanical. Social relations are here shown to be amenable to a higher law than caste. Here, as Michelet has enthusiastically said, "is a new revelation; God incarnate in a non-Brahmanic caste; the ideal of holiness transferred to a Kshattriya; as later, in Europe, St. Louis, a warrior, a king, becomes the spiritual ideal, of whom a contemporary exclaims, 'O holy layman, whose deeds the priests should emulate!'"[3]

Râma is indeed the universality of the divine life. The arrow with which he slays the Satan of the epic, Râvana, is "made from the spirit of all the gods." He is intensely human. Overwhelmed by his afflictions, he is consoled by the gods. "Having appeared on earth in human form, his actions must accord with those of human beings." Human he is to the point of yielding to temptations now and then for the mo-

[1] *Adhyâtma Râmây.* (the Vaishnava version of the epic). Wheeler, II. p. 308, 404.
[2] *Râmây.*, IV. [3] *Bible de l'Humanité*, p. 52.

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ment. Thus he puts away Sitâ after all her fidelity, merely because her virtue had been exposed to peril while in the hands of her demon ravisher, and suffers her to enter the fire to prove her innocence; a dramatic invention, to bring out the national sensitiveness in regard to female chastity, at the same time that it affords Râma the opportunity of naively reproaching himself for injustice to her, and so makes his very weakness inspire new affection, and associate him with human and even childish experience.

"His face became like the moon in the month of snows: if he had sent his queen from his palace for fear of evil speech, he had not been able to banish her from his heart."[1]

There is at least a democratic touch in this feature of the story. He explains the act by saying, "I knew she was true; but I put her to the test lest the people should blame me" for lack of respect for the purity of wifehood. So when in irritation he slays a Śudra, the victim is transported in a beautiful form to paradise.[2] Râma at last ascends to heaven from the banks of the Sarayu, resuming his divine essence, amidst all holy persons, revelations, powers, elements, in sight of all the people and even the lower animals. In the heavens appear all the gods, in infinite splendor, amidst fragrant winds and rain of flowers. As Râma enters the sacred waters, Brahmâ from the sky pronounces the words: —

"Approach, O Vishnu! enter thine own body, the eternal ether. Thou art the abode of the worlds."[3]

Deliverance from sin.

By the blessing of Râma's name and through previous faith in him, all sins, according to Vaishnava belief, are remitted; and "every

[1] *Raghuvansa*, XIV.
[2] *Râmây.*, VII.
[3] *Adhy. Râmây.* (Wheeler, p. 393).

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one, whatever his iniquities, whether a Brahman or a Chandâla, a king, or a beggar, who shall at death pronounce this name with sincere worship, shall be forgiven." The gods, conversing together of the repentance and restoration, in this way, of an evil spirit who had sought to compass the ruin of Râma, say:—

"Behold how this sinner has been saved! Such is the benevolence of Râma. What good actions has this demon performed that he could deserve such happiness? He has, from having resigned his life at Rama's feet and beholding him, been absorbed into him."[1]

Hindu theology understands even better than Christian how to shift off the burden of an evil conscience, by trust in vicarious merits. This offence against the moral laws in either case we are not commending to an enlightened age. Yet in its origin the idea has very plain relation to the sense of an omnipotent power and purpose to relieve from crushing burdens of moral and spiritual penalty. In the expression of absoluteness in divine good-will, no form of incarnation has attempted so wide a scope as the Râma of this epic mythology, whose worst enemies, while they are punished, after Hindu fashion, with much outlay of terrific penalty, are yet all taken up into heaven at last, through such force of good as may have once been in them, and the all-embracing benignity and mercy of the god.

Democratic and humane elements

These liberal and benignant elements are reproduced in the modern Vaishnava sects, founded on the worship of Râma: such as those of Râmânanda and Kabir, of Rai-Dâs and Dâdu, of which further notice will be taken hereafter. These teachers were for the most part men of the lowest

[1] *Adhy Râmây.*, p 287.

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castes; and the mythology that has already gathered about their names centres in the democratic reaction against caste and ecclesiastical authority which has gone steadily on throughout Hindu history. Of this element Vishnu, *as Râma*, is the constant representative.

The relation of this humanitarian spirit to the worship of Râma is illustrated by the charters of land granted by the later Hindu kings, and written on metallic tablets, which are constantly coming to light. Their stereotyped phrase quotes Râma as declaring that "to give away land is to cross oceans of sin; while to resume or reappropriate it is to fall back into hells of transmigration."

Krishna.

The incarnation of Vishnu as *Krishna* is of a more complex character, and covers a still larger ground of historic relation; embracing in the diversity of its phases the whole compass of Hindu experience. In Krishna every popular and every speculative ideal, every instinct and every conviction that sought religious sanction, has found its embodiment; each in turn assuming this traditionally consecrated name. In its service therefore, as well as in its sound, the name corresponds with that of Christ in the religious history of the Western nations. It has represented every stage of progress, every degree of enlightenment, or of the lack of it, in Hindu history. It is the divinization of desire and hope from lowest to highest level, the sport of the superstitious fancy and of the devout imagination alike. They have made it mean whatever they would. It is vain therefore to look for moral or speculative unity in what is plainly but a common name for the whole of Hindu aspiration, exclusive only of its most rationalistic side; a thread by which it has

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given some semblance of continuity to its past. In this respect it does not differ from the endless discordance of high and low ideals, which Christianity, through its ages of sectarian strife, has comprehended under the name of Christ, reaching back indeed through the earliest records of his life. If all these had at some epoch been brought together into one vast Christian Bible, in which the Church had ever since been seeking by repeated elaborations and mystical reinterpretations to preserve the continuity of its faith, through the one term common to the whole, — the name of Christ, — it would be analogous to what has happened in this Krishna-worship of the Hindus. An indefinite expansion of the name of Christ, to cover all stages and forms of recognized faith, and all sacred records on which they rest, is really the fact of Christian history, although the whole process is not concentrated in such a Bible as has been suggested. So true is this, that the name has long since ceased to be of service for conveying an idea of the actual religious belief of its confessors.

Now the Mahâbhârata is for the Hindu masses a Bible, somewhat of this description, though by no means exclusively in honor of Krishna. It is an immense ocean, into which almost every stream of Hindu faith and feeling has by one path or another found its way. Age after age, barbarous, heroic, or ecclesiastical, has contributed its popular traditions, its religious speculations, its morality and its faith, to swell this colossal epic; and it embodies, on a prodigious scale, every element of dramatic, intellectual, and spiritual, as well as popular and national interest familiar to the Hindu mind. It has probably undergone frequent readjustments to fresh experience under

The Krishna Bibles.

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the influence of the religious classes. From time to time fresh fragments of ethics and philosophy have been interpolated, often in the strangest context: the profoundest spirituality flows from the lips of dying barbarians, and metaphysics are sounded to their depths in the intervals of internecine strife.

The Bhâgavata Purâna[1] is another vast body of incarnation myths and traditions, more especially devoted to the worship of Krishna, whose manifold births and forms are traced through all cosmogony, theology, philosophy, and who here becomes the universal absorbent and solvent of traditional beliefs. Both Epic and Purâna are the free play of Hindu imagination and fancy, and turn past, present, and future into song. They connect the national life with the simple ages of minstrelsy, purporting to come from the lips of bards.

Krishna mythology.

The Krishna of the Epos might seem to be imperfectly defined as an incarnation, to the religious sense. He seems sometimes to be man, sometimes God of gods. At one time his divinity is denied, at another he seems unaware of it. He is opposed, slighted, assailed, wounded. Even as incarnation, he is but a hair from Vishnu's body. But in the Purânas, he is the Supreme alone.[2] He is Vâsudeva, God with the world, in all beings, and without appeal. He combines all exalted appellatives and powers, and many that we should hold as quite other than exalted. But through all incongruities the religious interest is held fast to the person of Krishna, as central incarnation of protecting and retributive deity, as well as

[1] Translated by Eugène Burnouf.

[2] In the *Brahma Vaivartta*, he is adored by all the gods. See Wilson's analysis in *Essays on Sansk. Lit.*, I. 94.

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the embodiment of ideals and delights essentially human. That much of personal biography is to be discerned through this immeasurable haze of fable is improbable enough. It seems quite as impracticable to construct a positive basis or nucleus of historical fact out of the mythology of the cowherd boy, or the Kshattriya hero, as out of the supernaturalism of the god. And certainly the moral value of the Krishna faith is in no degree determinable by tracing it back, upon mythical authority, to somebody who was "originally a mere cowherd, stealing butter and performing similar pranks when a boy, and rendering himself famous by his amours when a man"![1]

The democratic character of this faith in its original form has already been inferred[2] from the relation of the name Krishna (or *the black*) to the color of the lowest caste and of the aboriginal races of India. Its suggestions of an ancient sense of brotherhood, and of a powerful influence on Aryan faith from the side of conquered or enslaved tribes, as well as the poetic justice of which this worship of the black by the white is a historic landmark, seem to me very impressive.

The idyllic legends of the Krishna-Govinda (or cowherd), his boyish pranks, his miraculous feats, and amours among the cowherdesses, are evidently based on the folklore of rude country tribes, like those of the patriarchal Hebrew age. Their grotesque humor reminds us of the miracle plays of the Middle Ages, in which the New Testament myths, grown too familiar to be venerated, were freely handled for the general amusement; and this wild jungle of tropic fable has far more than the animal exuberance and lawless

[1] Wheeler's *Hist. of India.*

[2] See chapter on the *Bhagavadgitâ.*

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sportiveness of the "Arabian Nights." Doubtless the coarseness of its natural meaning was spiritualized away by the later, more enlightened, Krishna-worshippers,[1] just as the barbarities and sensualities of the older Bible legends have been by later Jews and Christians.

Noble functions of Krishna.

But in the main body of the epos, Krishna assumes a nobler function. Through all the fratricidal horrors of the great war between kindred Pândus and Kurus, the most tragic tale ever told in song, he enacts the part of mediator and consoler: he is not a warrior, but a peace-maker; interferes in the strife purely in the interest of justice, and mourns with the love of a brother over the fearful consummation of evil-doing which all his efforts fail to prevent. Though a Kshattriya in his human form, and though other passages relate his tremendous exploits in destroying the wicked, he refuses to fight in this unnatural war; will be only Arjuna's charioteer, on the just side, if war *must* be; and Arjuna chooses his presence, as of itself more than armies, and as fullest assurance of victory. Though able to compel obedience, he respects the freedom of those who choose to disregard his wise and humane counsels, while he strives to compose the bitter feud between brothers. Warned that the attempt would be useless, he says:—

"To deliver the world from all this preparation for strife is the highest of duties; and it is right to give all one's efforts to such a duty, whether they succeed or fail."

Sent to the hostile Kuru princes with this intent, he is received with divine honors, in festival raiment, with offerings of sandal-wood and perfume; carpets are

[1] *Bhâgav. Purâna*, X.

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strewn in his path, and the king goes out on foot to meet him. Yet his advice is rejected, and his person threatened. And when his hopes that kindredship would have enabled him to save the infatuated Kuravas from destruction are proved vain; when his tender and noble appeals, and his prophecies of coming desolation, alike fail, he returns sorrowing, after embracing the noblest of these fated ones, with tears over the bitter future that must come to them all.

When the multitude of Brahmans crave of him forgiveness for sin, he answers, "If your hearts be pure and single before God, there is hope of forgiveness from Him." He consoles Arjuna for the loss of his son, saying: "His fame will endure for ever, and it might be said that he is still alive. Children, like worldly goods, are given to us by God; and he can resume them at his pleasure."

He comforts a woman for a similar bereavement by reminding her "how happy a mother should be whose son has met so glorious a destiny." At the end of the war he bids the victors administer justice to all the oppressed, and promises them reward for their good deeds in another life.

After the doom has fallen upon his people, and his brothers and companions have perished, as he sits alone in his sorrow in the forest, he is fatally wounded by a careless hunter, whose remorse he seeks to allay in the hour of his own death, saying, "Go thy way: thine is not the blame." We should not expect that very exalted moral standards would be found interwoven with a movement of warfare so brutal and ferocious as that of the Mahâbhârata, where the world seems given over to the nemesis of wrathful and destructive passions; yet it really abounds in noble

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reconciliations, in heroic self-disciplines, in the loyalties of tender affection. And in this epic Krishna is, in his relations to the Pandu war, a redeeming presence of justice, magnanimity, and mercy, which, spite of all the monstrosities of supernaturalism, flows in a golden thread of providential purport through the retributive woof of wrong and pain.

Participation in the whole of life.

This ideal incarnation aspires, therefore, to include all nature and life, and to divinize all human duty by the direct participation of deity in its manifold spheres.

"Priest, teacher, marriageable man, householder, and beloved companion, because he is all this, therefore has Krishna been honored. Generosity, ability, sacred wisdom, heroism, humility, splendor, endurance, cheerfulness, joyousness, exist constantly in this unfailing one. It is Krishna who is the origin and end of all the worlds. All this universe comes into being through him, the eternal Maker, transcending all beings. And he enlightens and gladdens the assembly, as a sunless place would be cheered by the sun, or a windless spot by the wind."[1]

Krishna, in short, represented the genial and happy sense of unity for all finite relations with the infinite and eternal. The universality of the religious instinct, shown in this combination of the cosmical with the manifold human in one divine personality, is an element of very great interest.

In absorbing the universe into their divinity, the Krishna of Eastern, and the Christ of Western faith are in their diverse ways analogous. The Christian incarnation, however, while superior in spiritual elevation, does not attempt to represent that *direct personal experience* of actual social functions which makes the special interest of geniality and breadth in Krishna. Resting its claims on actual history, not on

[1] *Mahâbh.*, VI.

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mythical license, it has to recognize its own limits in the biographical fact, that Jesus was eminently individualist in his ideal, isolated in his personal relations, and negative in many of his precepts and beliefs towards social and public interests; nor has it ever been able to free itself from the positive limitations of its human scope, which belong to that historical form in which it still centres. It is an old proverb that "no man is so great or wise as all mankind."

I do not forget that the Christ has been believed to be mystically formed within all true believers, *whatever functions they may fulfil*. But this faith does not exalt the *functions themselves*, as actual human relations, with the dignity of divine personal participation in them. It has ever been apt to mark, instead, a withdrawal from the secular life into an interior pietistic sphere. Our modern ideal does indeed claim such participation, in a real sense, for all becoming human relations, all the "works and days" of our life. If God is manifest anywhere for us, it is in these. But such faith rests on that large respect for life, which is of recent origin. It could hardly have derived its sanctions from a personal incarnation, whose worshipper would be shocked to conceive him as having been a father, a husband, a lover, a householder, a genial associate, or a faithful citizen, accepting the real emergencies of society, and bearing his part in them. We have seen that such complete union of deity with life is hinted in the childish mythology of the Krishna faith. The maturer form of this belief which mankind has now reached is due not only to purifying limitations by the Christian ideal, but to the secular energy, science, and respect for practical uses, natural to the Western races.

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Krishna as unity of human and divine.

It is no part of my present purpose to follow the course of Krishna-worship into the wilderness of the later Purânas, where its pathless tangle of mythology and speculation reflects the whole inner world of Hindu character, at its best and at its worst. It is sufficient to refer here to the completeness with which it expresses the unity of the divine and the human in the speculative passages of the Mahâbhârata, of which the Bhagavadgitâ is the noblest illustration. As a specimen of these, I quote the words ascribed to Brahmâ in witness of the supremacy of this later divinity, who has supplanted him, as Christ has supplanted Jove and Jehovah in the West: —

"That Being who is Supreme, who is to be, who is the soul of all beings, and the Lord, it is with Him that I have been conversing, O deities! He of whom I, Brahmâ, master of the whole world, am the son, is by you to be adored. This Being is the highest mystery, the highest sphere, the highest Brahma, the highest glory. He is the undecaying, the undiscernible, the eternal. He is called Purusha [personal spirit]. He is hymned and is not known. He is celebrated as highest truth, power, joy."[1]

Significance of the Vishnu Avatâras.

But it is as continually reborn for the restoration of mankind, that Krishna hints of largest spiritual meaning. In this he represents Vishnu, who, as perpetual Saviour, embodies in the universality of his incarnation the religious postulate of the unity of all life. The *avatâras* of Vishnu pass through all ages of time as well as all grades of existence; the lowest grade being referred to the earliest epoch in time, the highest to the present and future. He is Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man Lion, Dwarf, Soldier, Brahman, Krishna, and finally the Kalki or Judge at

[1] *Mahâbhârata*, B VI.

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the last day. He is even recognized, by the popular faith, in the humane, all-loving Buddha. No age, no form, exhausted this ever-present redeemer; ever waiting at the doors; ever reappearing with fresh underived forces and higher embodiment, through the æons of an imagination, to which a thousand years were but a day. The *moral* symbol also shines through this as it shines through the poetic mythology of incarnation in all religions. These *avatâras* are all for what were regarded as humane, remedial, or morally judicial ends.

"There is nothing thou hast not already in thyself: and the cause of all thy births is nothing else than thy love for the world."[1]

Thus as the Dwarf, Vishnu redeems the whole earth from the impieties that have mastered it. The gods being allowed by their enemies only so much as this dwarf could cover when lying down, the whole earth is overspread by his miraculous expansion: it is thus shown to be an altar for sacrifice, and won for the true worshipper.[2] The highest hidden in the lowest, deity in the most despised, — this is the mystery of moral power. And always around this plays the mythologic faculty. The dwarf's three miraculous paces that span all the worlds, and win them for the good;[3] the wisps of straw in a saint's peaceful hand that discomfit the hosts of a self-idolatrous king;[4] the two mere hairs, black and white, from Vishnu's body, incarnated to remove the burdens and sufferings of the earth;[5] the human form, alone of all possible ones forgotten in

[1] *Kâlidâsa's Raghuvanśa*, X. So the Harivanśa distinctly affirms that they are all for the good of the world (CXXIX. Langlois's Transl., II. 26).

[2] *Śatapatha-Brâhmana.*

[3] See Muir's *Sansk. Texts*, IV. ii. 4; *Bhâgav. Purâna*, VIII. 20.

[4] Muir, ibid. 5; *Mahâbh.*, V. [5] *Vishnu Purâna.*

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contempt by the demon Râvana (who had obtained the boon that he should be slain by no being he should name), becoming thereby the one guise under which Vishnu can enter the world to deliver it from his power;[1] — these and many other similarly suggestive fancies in the incarnation-lore of India are the child's play of that moral instinct which discerns strength in weakness. God felt in the atom makes the whole world divine.

But it is as Krishnà, the god-man of the Bhagavad-gitâ, that Vishnu speaks the grand affirmation which really lifts this Oriental faith in divine presence into universality: —

"Although I am in my own nature incapable of birth or death, and lord of all created things, yet as often as vice prevails over virtue, so often I become manifested, to protect the good, to punish the evil. I am present in every age to establish right."[2]

In truth, all the great Hindu reformers, as they came in turn, — Kapila, Buddha, Śankara Âchârya, Chaitanya the Vaishnava teacher, and the rest, — have been held to be incarnations of Vishnu the preserving God. Ever on the serpent whose venom is destruction reposes Vishnu, as if to guarantee that those terrible coils are folded beneath him in lowly subjection; and "on the thousand-hooded heads the sign of good fortune is written."

And so through dream and superstition and childish fancy, as well as thoughtful meditation, shines more or less clearly the faith that God abides in the world, and that moral evil itself enforces the assurance of infinite restoring love.

But have we not here overlooked the difference

[1] *Râmâyana*, I. [2] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. iv.

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between *real* incarnation, and that which is mythological only? On this point it is worth our while to consider to what extent the difference itself is real, and how far it has bearing on the substance of religion. Mythical and "real" incarnation.

More or less of mythology must always invest all belief in special incarnations. When the religious imagination finds a point of attachment for such a belief, it pays indeed some regard to historical and biographical fact, accepting its influence for a time. Yet it uses this positive element very freely in the main, and more so continually to serve its own desire and need. And it is impossible that the past should be served otherwise. No historical person can contain all that the aspiration to find the infinite in human life really means.[1] Having this scope, incarnation, as an idea, has no dependence on biographical facts, however it may limit itself for a time by centering in them. And so when the facts are positively known, or when the divinized person is disclosed and classified, it simply takes new flight, winged with its new meanings, finding fresh expressions for that which can, by its very definition, accept no form as final. This result is inevitable; as true of Jesus as of Gotama; as true of incarnation, claimed for a real personage, as of that which, like the avatâras of Vishnu, is purely ideal and mythological.

The "reality" of God in Man cannot be confined within *any* definite person, whether historical or mythological. It covers all ideals, whether of thought or of life. But it points forward to far more than these, as yet unrevealed in the depths of human nature.

[1] Thus is, as I have said, recognized in Bâbism, which affirms eighteen personal manifestations of God in history, and looks forward to a future Bâb.

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To its infinite promise, history and mythology, imagination and fact, faith and conduct, all lead the way.

Whether the faith in a special incarnation has for its object a mythical or a historical person, the effect is substantially the same. To their respective worshippers, both the one and the other are equally real, and even equally historical. Equally valid, too, for the soul is her own ideal, whether its realization can be shown past dispute to have actually come to pass or not. For her experience, at least, it is actual.

Rights of the ideal over the historical.

It is in the ideal itself that value inheres, not in its having a historical type or source. It cannot be made dependent on sanctions from the actual world, since its free desire is the very power by which alone the actual is lifted into a step of progress. In other words, it is only through the freedom of the ideal from all definitive historical times and persons, that incarnation, which as manifestation of the Infinite can only consist in endless progress, can be realized at all.

A grand historical figure has always its value as element of human dignity, and aid to human growth; but it must inevitably be brought to the impartial tests of that Spirit which cannot be exhausted nor confined. And it is the *Idea* which sways a civilization, however expressed, that proves how far it has really incarnated the divine; while the question whether it has a theological faith in some God-man, which claims to rest on historical fact, is one of minor importance.

That Jesus was a historical person, and Krishna but a mythological ideal, if that be so, does not *of itself* make the Christian idea of incarnation more "real," more valid, more enduring than the Hindu. Krishna, for the Hindu, is as real to that sense of the

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divine to which incarnation must ever appeal, as if he had actually lived, instead of originating in the religious imagination and faith of his worshippers.

Thus it would be vain to present the "historical evidences of Christianity" to the Hindu mind, in order to prove its exclusive incarnation-dogma, by showing Jesus to have been a fact of history, while Krishna was only a myth. Were these evidences ever so strong, they would be to little purpose: since the circumstance that an ideal had *once* actually a form in a personal life would carry no stronger proof of incarnation than the circumstance that another ideal has *now* actually a form in *human faith and zeal*.

'Preparation for Christianity.'

In like manner the discovery by Christian scholars, in their study of Hindu religion, of what they may regard as faint heathen "foregleams and dim presentiments of Christian truths," — such as trinity, atonement by the saint for the sinner, and salvation by the merits of the saint, — justifies no expectation that the *Christian* forms of these beliefs, as "based on truth instead of dream," must be recognized by the heathen mind as that for which it was yearning, and for which its way has been prepared. The resemblances simply show that, even as believers in such conceptions and doctrinal forms, the Hindus can satisfy their desire through their own sacred books, legends and dogmatic constructions, without resorting to the Christian.

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VI.

TRANSMIGRATION.

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TRANSMIGRATION.

THERE is another side of the Hindu conception of life and nature which we have as yet hardly touched. Hindu idea of life.

The devotee strove to extirpate the senses, to dissolve the external world in illusion. But do not suppose that this effort represents his spiritual limit. Do not infer that his religious instinct was incapable of touching the opposite pole of experience. Nature will not be abjured. The Yogi may will it a dream, or the Calvinist pronounce it accursed. But the denial enforces its own antithesis. And in the East a path lay open to reaction in behalf of the senses, through that principle which we have seen to be the soul of Hindu faith; namely, that all life is, in its inmost essence, one and the same.

It has been believed by many, that Hindu poetry represents the aspirations of the lower castes as distinguished from the highest, or nominally religious, class. But this cannot be admitted. If intuitive imagination, intense ideality, and a deep, all-absorbing sense of the mystery of being are qualities of the poet, then the philosophy and religion of the Hindu schools are eminently poetic. They are not only so in substance, but in nearly all their great products even choose the poetic form. That whatever genuine Its poetic capabilities.

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imaginative power they have tends to freedom and universality is obvious from the nature of imagination itself.

Love of nature.

Even asceticism, however relentless, could not suppress the enthusiasm of this poetic sense for the beauty with which a tropical nature surrounded and beset it. Through hymn and precept and philosophic discourse, through Veda, Upanishad, and Purâna alike, flows the perpetual symbolism of day and night, of the rivers, the mountains, the sea. Dawn and eve, the flow of seasons, the stir of life and the habits of creatures in those solemn Indian forests, are described in the epos and mythic tale with a delicacy and tenderness hardly to be expected from a people whose instinctive disposition, even where it did not reach philosophical expression, was to regard nature as illusion.

The Râmâyana especially abounds in what we may call mood-painting of nature, in which every feature of the scene is harmonized into one sympathetic and responsive relation with the special human feeling for the time in contact with it.[1] So that the visible world seems graciously made to lend plastic atmosphere and expressive voice to all private meditation and friendly communion. While Anasuya, the wife of a forest saint, listens at twilight to the story of Sitâ's youthful love, she seems suddenly to awake, as by some mysterious and magnetic outward touch, to a sense that the beauty and peace of the hour is expressing, better than all words, what both their hearts find in the tale.

"See, O bright one! the sun has set: the gracious night, set with stars, has been drawing on. The birds, scattered by day in search of food, are now softly murmuring in their nests. The

[1] Kâlidâsa's *Meghaduta* (Carriercloud) illustrates this perfectly.

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sages are moving homeward from their ablutions, their evening sacrifices are offered, and the blue smoke ascends from the hermitages, tinged with the hue of the dove's neck. The trees are darkening all around, and distant objects growing dim; while the night-loving beasts of prey are prowling, the deer are sleeping peacefully by the altars and sacred places. The moon clothed with brightness rises in the sky."[1]

It is so natural to these dreamers to find nature responsive to the human sentiment or mood of the hour, that they constantly fall into instinctive recognition of the fact. The poet thus describes the impression made by the first experience of natural scenery upon Râma and Lakshmana on their way to the wilderness:—

"They found the lakes eager to serve them by the sweetness of their waters, the birds by their delicious warbling, the winds by the fragrant dust of flowers which they bore along, the clouds by their refreshing shadows."[2]

Pointing out to Sitâ the scenes of his exile, and describing his pain at being separated from her, Râma says:—

"These creepers, which could not speak, but which had pity on my grief, showed me by their broken branches which way the Rakshasa had carried thee off, affrighted. I knew not whither thou wert gone; but the gazelles, forgetting to graze, and holding their heads lifted, directed me southward, with their eyes. The clouds poured down fresh rain on the mountain while I was shedding tears at thy absence. At this season, when the wet earth sympathized with my weeping, I could not bear the sight of the early spring buds, that seemed seeking to rival thy eyes."[3]

And again as they pass a hermitage, he asks:—

"Do not the grand forest trees, under which the hermits have plunged into deeps of meditation in the open air, seem to have been themselves transported, by their own serene tranquillity, into the divine life, in God?"[4]

So when the arch demon Râvana approaches Sitâ,

[1] *Râmây.*, III [2] *Raghuvansa*, XI. [3] Ibid., XIII. [4] Ibid.

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to carry her away captive, all nature is paralyzed with fear: —

"As he moves, the breeze is still with dread, the tree shadows thicken; the twigs stiffen, and beasts and birds stand mute; and the waves of the river tremble with terror." [1]

The universe was peopled with subtle intelligences, whispering presentiments and warnings, and assuming every form and sound by turns with sportive freedom, unrestrained by that sober sense of limit and definite function which shaped the divinities of the Greek. Millions of spiritual beings moved in the winds, the waters, the trees, the clouds: the living creatures were but their masks, half-hiding, half-revealing this weird possession of each form by the infinite productivity of nature. Hosts of fairies and demons, troops of dancers and singers, Apsaras and Gandharvas, hovered in the sky, rained flowers on the altars and the festive crowds, or filled the air with sweet and solemn music. Life was a stream that flowed through endless transformations; and it was the delight of this mystical fancy to trace the protean play from shape to shape, through all the changes of natural birth and death, in man, in the lower animals, in the vegetable and even in the mineral world; and to associate them by ideal identities, as earnestly as modern science traces the atom through all the transmigrations of its history.

Source of the idea of metempsychosis.

The senses asserted their rights. And the incessant efforts of the devotee to escape their sphere only turned his thoughts the more intently, at intervals, on their importunate addresses. And this is a source of the extraordinary proportions assumed in Hindu thought by the idea of me-

[1] *Râmây.*, III.

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tempsychosis. The belief that each human soul passes through a succession of lives, in different bodily forms, visible or invisible, and in ascending, descending, or revolving series, — human, animal, vegetable, or even cosmical, from the plant to the star, — has perhaps been accepted, in some form, by disciples of every great religion in the world. It is common to Greek philosophers, Egyptian priests, Jewish Rabbins, and several early Christian sects. It appears in the speculations of the Kabbalists, of the Neo-Platonists, of later European mystics, and even of socialists like Fourier, who elaborates a fanciful system of successive lives mutually connected by numerical relations. It reaches from the Eleusinian Mysteries down to the religions of many rude tribes of North America and the Pacific isles. Not a few noble dreams of the cultivated imagination are subtly associated with it, as in Plato, Giordano Bruno, Herder, Sir Thomas Browne; and especially notable is Lessing's conception of a gradual improvement of the human type through metamorphosis in a series of future lives. Its prominence in the faith of the Hindus affords ample material for studying its natural grounds and conditions, as well as its significance for the universal experience.

Its higher elements.

Metempsychosis, as an idea and a faith, has been substantially the effort to express certain imperishable intuitions and organic relations.

Immortality.

At the root of it lay first the sense of immortality: the idea of life as not only transcending death, but as multiplying itself through successive forms of transient being, as if to emphasize and affirm its own necessity *again* and *again;* an entity which no

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bonds of material investment could hold fast and no dissolution destroy, however low it might descend in the scale of nature. The sense of immortality is indeed always in some sort a sense of *inherent existence*, and looks backward as well as forward, behind birth as well as beyond death; infers *pre*-existence as well as *post*-existence. It shrinks as much from an absolute beginning of our being as from an end of it; and so must either leave the soul it is tracing backward, in an impenetrable mystery, content with noting its emergence thence, at the moment of what we call birth, "trailing clouds of glory from God, who is our home,"—or else follow its earlier adventures with the eye of faith, through previous forms of being, forgotten or dimly recollected. And so the contemplative imagination of the Hindus loved to brood over these possible forms of successive births *in both directions*, from the island of this present life through boundless oceans of the past and future. It was at least a serene and immovable presumption of immortality that made this dream-voyage through the spheres of existence attractive and even possible.

Moral sequence.

Then there was the profound faith in immutable laws of moral sequence. "Action," says Manu, "verbal, corporeal, mental, bears good or evil fruit, according to its kind: from men's deeds proceed their transmigrations."[1] In the philosophical language of the Hindu schools, the "bonds of action" are but another name for the endless consequences of conduct. It was natural to explain in this way those present moral as well as physical inequalities among men, their differing characters and destinies, which could not be accounted for by the data at hand. The

[1] *Manu*, XII. 3.

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sense of justice demanded that there should be found adequate grounds for these differences, in antecedent good or bad conduct; which of course could only have made their marks in earlier states of existence. Such speculations have been common in the Christian world also; as solutions to justify not merely these actual differences in human destiny, but even those imaginary ones of theological invention, for whose infiniteness there seemed no rational ground in men's actual doings in this world. From Origen down to Edward Beecher, the solution of this "conflict of ages" has been sought in *pre-existence*, which one or another theory of human nature and destiny had made a necessary hypothesis, upon these constantly recognized principles of moral continuity and sequence.

We cannot wonder that the ancients satisfied their instincts of justice by similar explanations of the mysteries of good and evil, both physical and moral.

Ethical demand for pre-existence.

It is the force of this ethical demand that every gift or defect shall find its ground in positive desert, shall point to some way in *which it was earned*, — that so frequently causes great personal virtues or powers to impress the imagination as spiritual resources that only pre-existence can explain; as heaped-up harvests of former lives, spent in noble disciplines and toil; while excessive forms of vice seem to require similar accumulations of *evil* tendency through lives of correspondent tone.

Hereditary transmission is indeed the only answer of science to these problems, — and this, in fact, *is* transmigration of qualities and destinies, if not of souls; but it does not satisfy that demand of the moral nature, which pre-existence, as we have seen, was better suited to meet; and so the solution of the in-

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equalities in question goes over with us more wisely, among the possibilities of the life to come. Our oracle is not memory, but growth.

The inadequacy of these backward-looking solutions is shown especially in the *injustice* of supposing that the evil in men's characters or circumstances is punishment for sins committed in a previous life, and consequently is simply their *desert*. It would seem to forbid kindness and mercy as interferences with such appointed retribution. It would seem to eternize such conditions of evil, and to make their abolition a crime. Some have even traced the persistence of caste in India to the force of this transmigration-faith, and its associated theory of evil. The idea that evil is always the sign and punishment of past sin was not, however, peculiar to the Hindus, nor to the belief in transmigration. It was held by the Hebrews also; and the protest of the natural heart and mind against it is the central idea of the sublime drama of Job.

In fact the grand humanities of Hebrew thought combine with those of Buddhism to prove that men have not always allowed their belief in this theory of evil as the punishment of sin to produce its logical consequences by paralyzing the desire of moral progress and hardening the heart. We even find that the sources of belief in transmigration reveal germs of a quite opposite character, of which we shall presently speak.

A presentiment of scientific truth.

In truth, neither hereditary transmission nor metempsychosis can explain these mysteries of gift and defect, or happiness and misery, which depend on causes inconceivably subtle and past fathoming. But not the less truly was the old wide-spread belief in manifold births and lives an

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earnest attempt to solve them on the principle of inviolable moral consequences. And there is a sense in which ancient dream and modern science are here blended in a higher unity. Thus an Upanishad, relating to birth, contains a description of the embryo soul, as remembering former births and deeds, "having eaten many forms of food and drunk at many breasts;" and as then, upon entering the world of separate existence, losing the memory of these, while yet the consequences remain.[1] It would be hard to find a fairer statement than this, at once of what we know and what we dream, concerning the mystery of our endowment from the past.

Unity of life.

But the sense of immortality and the conviction of inviolable moral sequence had in India a soil to work in, of which metempsychosis was the natural and inevitable fruit. In the consciousness of the Hindu, all life was included under one conception, in one essence; one ocean where individual forms and grades of vitality were but transient waves that rose and fell; or, while holding their distinct and definite being, were yet of like substance with the whole. It was not so much that these individualities, or their continued existence, could be actually denied; but rather that the emphasis was laid on *life itself*, as idea, as common ground of all lives; *life*, the mystery in them all, the fullness, the freedom, the infinite capacity of metamorphosis, of protean play.

In this mystical brooding over the unity of all life, this sympathetic affinity, and sense of even inmost identity with the whole, there lay of course a powerful motive to the love of all living creatures. "The

[1] *Garbha Upanishad*, in Weber's *Indische Stud.*, II. 69, 70.

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Indian, united with all nature by ties of brotherhood, had his ears open on every side to the voice of compassion."[1] And here was the reaction from ideal dreams to interest in the visible outward world, of which, as I have already said, the transmigration theory of the Hindus illustrates the naturalness and even necessity.

The animal world.

Why should not the quiet anchorets, dreaming on this unity of all living and even lifeless forms, on this common experience that like the light came back in myriad reflections from them all to the dreaming mind and heart, suppose the brute creatures bound to themselves by human ties? They stood in much closer intimacy with these lower forms of being than St. Francis of Assisi, who praised God "for our brothers the sun, the wind, the air and cloud, by which Thou upholdest life in all beings;" who is said to have made literal application of the text, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," and to have loved to linger along his way, that he might join his "sisters, the birds, in singing praises to the Maker," and even remove worms from the path, lest they should be crushed by the traveller's foot. The Hindu hermits fed and tamed the forest creatures, and learned their language. "The gentle roe-deer, taught to trust in man, unstartled heard their voices."[2] They saw that upward striving towards man, on which modern science itself hesitates to draw a line that shall separate instinct and reason, and on which its comparative biology founds the largest unities. They pitied the dove torn by the eagle, the antelope fleeing from the tiger. They saw tenderness in the eye of the bird; and august serenity in the step of the elephant.

[1] Fr. v Schlegel. [2] *Śakuntalâ.*

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The Raghuvaṅśa describes a good king as "conjoining qualities which ordinarily interfere with each other, in pure accord, as the creatures lay down their natural antipathies when they come to the peaceful hermitage of a saint." The alarm of one of these pet antelopes at sight of the royal hunter's arrow is thus depicted by Kâlidâsa:—

"Aye and anon his graceful neck he bends
To cast a glance at the pursuing car;
And, dreading now the swift-descending shaft,
Contracts into itself his slender frame:
About his path, in scattered fragments strewn,
The half-chewed grass falls from his panting mouth;
See, in his airy bounds he seems to fly,
And leaves no trace upon the elastic turf."

The hermits interfere, and save their pretty charge.

"Now heaven forbid this barbèd shaft descend
Upon the fragile body of a fawn,
Like fire upon a heap of tender flowers!
Can thy steel bolts no meeter quarry find
Than the warm life-blood of a harmless deer?
Restore, great prince, thy weapon to its quiver.
More it becomes thy arms to shield the weak
Than to bring anguish on the innocent."[1]

The mystery of animal instinct might well inspire a certain awe and tender sympathy in such students of it as these anchorets were; so unerring is it, so finely attuned to nature, so rich in presentiment and omen, so magnetic in its fascinations. Montaigne quaintly says:—

"It is yet to be determined where the fault lies that the beasts and we don't understand each other; for we understand them as little as they do us; and by the same reason they may think us beasts, as we think them. From what comparison do we conclude

[1] Williams's transl. of *Śakuntalâ*.

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the stupidity we attribute to them? When I play with my cat, who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she does me? We mutually divert each other."

It is worth while, in view of this old and wide-spread instinct for metempsychosis, to read his very suggestive record of the points in which we must confess that brutes are beyond us.[1] What wonder is it that the eager soothsayers everywhere pried into the flight of birds, the howling of dogs, the cackling of geese, the hooting of owls, the cawing of crows, and searched the very entrails of beasts, to get at the secret that places them in such *rapport* as they evidently inherit, with human life? There was not a little true science blended with the dreams and arts of the old haruspices; and there was still more of respect for the fine truth and wisdom of instinct, in that persistent faith of the people by which these auguries were sustained. Instinct knows its path; is not deceived; halts not, nor wavers between opinions; has the wisdom of artists and lovers, of councillors and soldiers; listens and divines like genius; obeys an unseen guide through solitary ways we cannot trace, "lone wandering, but not lost." Man himself — whose mature vision sees here the sweet symbol of an invisible care, that "in the long way that he must tread alone will guide his steps aright" — hastened, even while ignorant of natural laws, to honor and consult this mysteriously sympathetic oracle. He explored this hieroglyphic of nature, even before he could read his own thought. We can well understand how the oldest wisdom should have found its place in the mouths of the brute creatures. It was man's early recognition of the sacredness of life in general, and specially of that veiled life

[1] *Essays*, II. xii. (*Apology for Raimond Sebonde.*)

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whose inarticulate speech was itself a kind of silence, and intimated with double force the mystery that pervades and limits every form of language and communion.[1]

Sympathies of man and nature.

We must remember, too, that the first preaching of Nature is in types and symbols of man. She is the endless and ever-present parable of his experience. And long before he understands how to cultivate patience, fortitude, trust, and love, as recognized forms of virtue, they shine before him in divine symbols that reflect his own spontaneous instincts, out of the unfailing endurance of the beasts of burden, the loves and labors of the birds, the peaceful accord of the wild creatures with those orderly laws of nature which prescribe their roaming and their rest. Even the wide-spreading, sheltering trees are human to these poetic ethics, and the grass of the field has a life beyond itself, and the waterfalls and rocks are souls. An older Sermon on the Mount was *in man*, and made him hearken gladly to worded lessons from the lilies and the fowls; for the voice of the teacher was but an echo from his own childhood. There is transcendent truth in the Hebrew myth that makes it man's first dignity to divine the sense of the living creatures, and to give them names.

Fables.

The oldest books that delighted men, and gave life a genial aspect, were the Fable Books. And so richly and creatively did the imagination flow in this direction, at the very outset, that most of our present stock of fables are somehow traceable

[1] See Plutarch's Essay on *Land and Water Animals* (Goodwin's Plutarch, vol. v.) The interest inherent in the subject is illustrated by the fact that Professor Abbot, in his invaluable *Bibliography of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, gives account of nearly two hundred works concerning the "Souls of Brutes."

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back to primitive Eastern apologues. The oldest known collections in the world are of Hindu origin. The Sanskrit Hitopadeśa, or "Good Counsels" of Vishnu Sarma, and the still older Panchatantra (with which recent discoveries are tending more and more fully to identify it[1]), have been freely translated into most languages of the East and of the West, and have made the name of Pilpay, or Bidpai, the beloved physician, to whom they are mythically ascribed, immortal, and everywhere at home. The far East is thus an ever-present teacher of civilization, appealing in the simplest and most effective way to the plastic mind of childhood, an unfailing fountain of practical and humane wisdom. The Hindu works just mentioned form the basis and type of most literature of this kind, although Greeks, Hebrews, Teutons, and other races, have each a stock of primitive gnomic apologues and maxims, of a more or less original cast.[2]

It is most interesting to note that the earliest real wisdom of life, the opening of its practical and social meaning, has been also an expression of human sympathy with the animal world. The morality of the Hindu fable-books is, as we have already seen, of good quality; and their hearty common sense redeems Indian literature from the charge of being competent to sentimental and speculative interests only. Their frank and manly dealing with the facts of common life make them a democratic protest, and an appeal

[1] See Benfey, in *The Academy* for April, 1872.

[2] Deslongchamps (*Essai sur les Fables Indiennes*) and Benfey (*Einleit. z. Pantschatantra*) carefully trace the relations of Western apologues and tales to these popular Hindu works. Lassen, IV. 902, even ascribes the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* to Hindu sources. Weber (*Indische Studien*, III.) has endeavored to separate a portion of the Indian fables from the rest, as derived from Greece; but he does so only to assign them, further back, to a Semitic — still an Oriental — origin.

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against social inequalities, in spite of their devotion to royalty and other traditional institutions; all of which they admonish, rebuke, and instruct, with a fearlessness and authority that is more refreshing than that of the Hebrew prophets, in so far as it stands wholly on the ground and in the strength of familiar ethical laws. The half-humorous indirectness of these protests and appeals, sent through the lower creatures, is as genial as it is sincere, and touches our sympathies more strongly than sterner tones of denunciation.

The Persian compiler of the Anvâr-i-Suhaili, which consists of the substance of the Hitopadeśa and the Panchatantra, translated into Pehlevi in the sixth century, describing the original Indian work, says, —

"In the time of Kasra Nushirwân this intelligence became spread abroad, that among the treasures of the kings of Hindustan there is a book which they have compiled from the speech of brutes, — of birds and reptiles and savage beasts; and all that befits a king in the matter of government is exhibited within the folds of its leaves, and men regard it as the stock of all advice and the medium of all advantage."[1]

These "Good Counsels" of the Brutes concern all matters involved in social and personal relations, but their special bearing is on the duties and opportunities of kings. "The Fable, with the Hindus," says Professor Wilson, "constitutes the science of *Niti*, or polity; rules for the good government of society in all matters not religious, the reciprocal duties of members of an organized body; and is hence especially intended for the education of princes." This is true not only of the Hitopadeśa and the Panchatantra, but to an extent of the epics also, which have even been called *nitiśâstras*, abounding as they do in political teaching, and

[1] *Anvâr-i-Suhaili*, Eastwick's transl., p. 6.

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especially from the animals. For these old monitors, kings are divinities; but it is, after all, only the *ideal* ruler that has honor, all unworthy kingcraft being severely handled both in the fables and maxims. How significant a fact, that the teaching of practical ideals should have been referred to this world of lower creatures, which we have been taught to regard as without gift of choice or power of progress!

The use of the Apologue under despotic governments in the East as well as in the freer West (where it is illustrated by the old German epos of Reynard the Fox), to convey satire and rebuke without offence to established powers, — or, in Oriental phrase, "that the ear of authority may be approached by the tongue of wisdom," — has been often exaggerated, though to an extent real. But it is hardly possible to overstate the freedom of play allowed the imagination by these half-human spheres of a strange unfathomable life. The strictly ethical purpose of the Fable indeed imposes certain limits upon the passion for hyperbole,[1] as does also that strong positive realism of animal qualities and habits, which constitutes its material. But in a religious and moral direction there was abundant room for idealization in these mysterious fidelities and powers.

Animal symbolism.

And so we can easily understand how the later mythology and popular poetry of India came to represent the deities in their incarnations as assuming the brute even oftener than the human form, while yet maintaining therein the noblest human virtues, or manifesting spiritual capacities vainly sought

[1] Not always obeyed in these old fables, which are occasionally extravagant in their descriptions of moral disciplines and sacrifices, — an argument, with Benfey, for their Buddhistic origin.

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among men. Thus that strange, long-lived, heavy-winged creature, the crow,[1] was held to be older than years could record. Perched on a rock or tree, he is the most venerable of devotees, meditating on the marvellous lives he has passed through, and dispensing to the eagle, monarch of birds, lessons of eternal wisdom for the government of himself and his empire.[2] The clumsy condor, sailing on massive wing over Chimborazo, was held sacred by the Incas and carved on their sceptres, as the eagle on those of the Cæsars. No wonder the heavy crow, who climbs among everlasting snows, is equally a wonder to the Hindu. The Sanskrit language gives him no less than seventy names. The serpent, worshipped by the aboriginal Hindu tribes, and symbolic to the Aryans of wisdom, healing, eternity, has a hundred names.[3] There were legends that consecrated the habits of the vulture,[4] that careful and thorough effacer of all revolting signs of decay and death; and of the fish, pathfinder and leader of man through the watery wastes; and of the tortoise, broadbacked supporter that no burden breaks down. The monkeys, those semi-human, self-asserting proprietors of the primeval forests of the Dekkan, become in the epics divine guides and deliverers of man in his explorations of their pathless expanses.[5] The mythologist gave his god of wisdom an elephant's head; mounted the avenging goddess on a tiger; strung the bow of his Cupid with a thread of honey bees; inwove the habits of every creature with the protean metamorphoses of divinity. As the Assy-

[1] Michelet, *The Bird*, p. 161.
[2] *Râmây.*, VII.
[3] Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*
[4] See the beautiful tale, in the *Râmâyana*, of the chivalrous attempt of the vulture king to protect Sitâ from Râvana, which costs him his life.
[5] *Râmây.*, IV. V.

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rian made and hallowed his cherubim, and the Egyptian his sphinxes, by means of this sympathetic sense of the unity of human and brute life, so the Hindu took the ox and the cow as representative of the sanctities of labor and beneficence; an instinct of special veneration common to India and Persia and Egypt and the Teutonic North.

"May he who has done wrong to my brother Râma," says Bhârata in the epic, "be the messenger of the wicked! May he kick his foot against a sleeping cow!"[1] To this day the country people in some districts of India put blades of grass between their teeth when they would deprecate anger, to remind those whom they fear, of the human protection and regard to which the cow is supposed to appeal.[2] This honor to the cow is the most ancient and universal form of devotion to animals known in India. The patient, faithful, bounteous creature was so essential and dear to the Vedic herdsmen that they made her attend the dead on his journey to the world of the fathers, to help him across the deep river, to guard him from all foes.[3] Even the gradual degeneracy of mankind was quaintly enough symbolized by this sacred animal standing in the golden age on four legs, in the silver on three, in the brass on two, and in the iron on one.

The zebus, or humpbacked cattle of India, are indeed very beautiful animals, and may well have inspired reverence among a primitive people. They have mild, intelligent eyes, a kindly expression, and their sides are covered with satinlike hair. As working, and as milch cattle, they are of admirable

[1] *Râmâyana*, II. [2] Elliott's *N. W. India*, I. p. 241.
[3] See Pictet, II. 519; Müller in *Zeitsch. d. D M. G.*, IX. Append.

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quality; and their walk is almost as fast as that of a horse.[1] The primal gratitude and veneration has continued throughout Hindu history. Kâlidâsa describes in a poetic strain the devotions rendered by a king to the sacred milch cow of a hermitage, in recognition of her "bearing in her full breast the means of paying the offerings due to guests, to manes, and to gods." All this was certainly natural enough to the Indo-Aryan, from the earliest Vedic times when the heavens and the earth were one great pasture ground for his divine herdsmen, who milked the rain-clouds for his support, down to the days of hermits whose still, patient, dreamy, ruminant life irresistibly suggests the image. Even the intolerable divine cows and bulls of Benarés testify of what was once a mingled sentiment of natural sympathy, gratitude for bounty, and religious awe.

Plutarch says the Egyptians called their sacred bull Apis "the fair and beautiful image of the soul of Osiris."

That the animal symbolism of the Egyptians and Hindus was associated with agricultural interests and astronomical signs is unquestionable. But this simply indicates how profound was the impression made by these relations of the animal world with the blessings of the earth and the sky. It may be, too, that the epical incarnations in bears and monkeys, and the popular avatâras of Vishnu in the shapes of fish, tortoise, lion, and boar, were, as a recent writer suggests,[2] connected in some way with the *pre-Aryan* worship of animals among the native tribes of the Dekkan, as was certainly the case with the widely spread veneration

[1] See *U. S. Agricultural Report* for 1865.

[2] Wheeler's *Hist. of India*

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for the serpent in India; and that their celebration in the Râmâyana was but part of the appeal of Neo-Brahmanism to popular beliefs for the purpose of expelling Buddhism. But behind all these incidental causes lies the deeper *religious* instinct which must explain such traditional worship itself. This is the ground of that striking difference which characterizes the literatures of Europe and Asia, in their treatment of brute nature. In the Hindu fables we find it instinctively idealized: its *best* elements are gladly brought out, and even the lowest treated with geniality. In the Teutonic epic of Reynard the Fox, on the other hand, the *lowest* are emphasized, and even the best have little respect. In the East the brute world belongs to religion; in the West, to satire. In Brahmanical legend, it has spiritual and moral validity in itself: in the Christian and Jewish, its worth stands mainly in its ministry to man, or as with the beast shapes of St. Anthony's tempters, and the gargoyles of Gothic architecture, as affording convenient masquerade for evil powers. It has been noted, too, as a difference between the Hindu fables and the Æsopic or Greek, that the former makes free use of the animal world indiscriminately for the representation of human character and feeling, while the latter employs the creatures in a more critical spirit, according to their special traits.[1] Yet this distinction may easily be carried much too far for the truth.

It is not without reason that Michelet, pointing to the functions of the cow and the ibis, the one to support human, the other to destroy reptile life, says: "That which has saved India and Egypt through

[1] Benfey, *Einleit. z. Pantsch.*

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so many misfortunes, and preserved their fertility, is neither the Nile nor the Ganges: it is respect for animal life by the mild and gentle heart of man." [1]

"God made all the creatures, and gave them
Our love and our fear:
To show we and they are His children,
One family here."

The beautiful Isis-myth of Egypt binds the human, animal, and inanimate worlds in common ties of tender sympathy with the divine. The goddess is guided in her sorrowful search for the lost Osiris by the divination of little children, and by the instinct of the dog; while the ark that holds his sacred body is protected by the loving embrace of a growing tree. And so all three forms of natural life are consecrated through powers of service faithfully used, and held dear to the heart of man by their sympathetic relations with the gods. In the Egyptian Isis-myth.

So, in the Hindu epic, hosts of gigantic bears and apes, endowed with magic powers to change their forms at will and control the forces of nature, devote all their energies to aid the holy cause of Râma in recovering his stolen Sitâ. There is no obstacle too vast for their passionate zeal and might to surmount, no service too noble or too delicate for their love to render. The Indian poet dares ascribe to the beasts of the forests, under this inspiration, all the chaste and heroic virtues of chivalry; and no Minnesinger ever celebrated an ideal of purer honor or nobler loyalty than "god-like Jatâyus," the vulture-king, or the titanic ape Hanuman,[2] who nevertheless tears up whole mountains in his arms, In the Hindu epos.

[1] *The Bird*, p. 148.

[2] *Râmây.*, V.

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destroys myriads of foes single-handed, and expands his bulk at will, ten leagues at a time. And these surpassingly helpful brutes are incarnations of gods; associated too with the elements, and forms of nature, as sons of the sun, of the sky, of fire, of the wind. So that the Hindu epic, like the Egyptian myth, makes religion a bond of sympathy between the brute, the human, and the natural worlds.

The Râmâyana even beautifully interweaves this tenderness towards the lower animals with the origin of its own rhythmic movements as poetry. The hermit Vâlmiki, seeing the distress of a female heron whose partner has been shot by a hunter, utters a reproof to the wanton sportsman for destroying the bird that murmured so softly as it went; and the gods made that rhythm which the words of sorrow (*soka*) spontaneously assumed the metre (*śloka*) in which he should celebrate the praise of Râma.

I recall nothing in English literature that resembles this delicacy of poetic sentiment, so much as Walter Savage Landor's idyl of the peasant, who, striking impatiently at a buzzing insect, "breaks the wing of a bee and the heart of a hamadryad at once."

In the Mahâbhârata legend of the exile of the Pândava princes, one of these brothers, who are divine incarnations, dreams that the wild creatures of the forest come to him trembling and weeping, and implore him to spare what few had escaped the terrible hunters, that they might be free from terror, and multiply their race once more. And he is moved with pity, and tells his brothers how the creatures had implored his mercy; whereat they depart from the forest, and dwell in another place.[1]

[1] *Mahâbh.*, II.

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"Beneath human castes," exclaims Michelet again, who may be called the literary apostle of a new gospel of sympathy with the animal creation, "there lies an immense caste, the poor brute world, to be delivered, to be lifted up. This is the triumph of India, of Râma and the Râmâyana. Hanuman is the Ulysses and Achilles of this epic war. More than any one else he delivers Sitâ. After the victory, Râma crowns and celebrates him. Between the two armies, before men and gods, *Râma and Hanuman embrace*. Talk no more of castes. The lowest of men may say, Hanuman has freed me."[1] Modern science, we may add, in the hands of our development philosophy, may yet enforce from the physiological side the genial lesson of this ancient song.

A lesson from the East.

The mercy due from man to the brute life dependent on his care, or ministering to his desires, is indeed only to be learned of the East. It is a touching and noble bequest she has laid up for ages, and gives over at last to the proud civilization that in other respects has outrun her, — in proof that she is still able to inspire and advance mankind. Judaism indeed had many noble humanities of this sort; but Christian teaching — almost, if not altogether, absorbed in man — has seldom emphasized a tender brotherhood with nature in her humbler living forms. "To bring these things within the range of ethics," says Lecky, "to create the notion of duties towards the animal world, has, so far as Christian countries are concerned, been one of the peculiar merits of the last century, and for the most part of Protestant nations. However fully we may recognize the humane spirit transmitted to the world; in the form of legends, from the

[1] *Bible de l'Humanité*, pp. 59, 75.

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saints of the desert, it must not be forgotten that the inculcation of humanity to animals on a wide scale is mainly the work of a recent and a secular age; and that the Mohammedans and the Brahmins have in this sphere considerably surpassed the Christians." [1]

After eighteen centuries of barbarity in this sphere of our relations, — the revelations whereof, in its actual condition, are to the last degree revolting, — the civilized West is just beginning to awake to the duty of protecting our "dumb neighbors," [2] and to ask whether the "beasts that perish" do not turn the tables, in the argument of immortality itself, upon the master, whose cruelties towards them mock his own special claim to be made in the image of God. We may yet appreciate Landor's tender tribute to his dog: "few saints have been so good-tempered, and not many so wise."

A mission for art.

And in this point of view Art has a mission, never accepted, as it should have been, by Christian schools. It is interesting to note that Ruskin, who regards sympathy with the lower animals as one of the "great English gifts" in art, but admits that it is yet "quite undeveloped," expresses the hope that "the aid of physiology and the love of adventure will enable us to give to the future inhabitants of the globe an almost perfect record of the present forms of animal life upon it, of which many are on the point of being extinguished."

The masks of the gods.

Under these larval masks, as the old philosophies affirmed, hide the dear and venerable gods themselves, or the spirits of men, who shall

[1] *European Morals*, II. 188.

[2] There are now in Europe, as appears from a recent address at Philadelphia, between one and two hundred societies for the protection of animals, composed largely of eminent men and women; and the number is rapidly increasing.

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one day reveal their ancient lives, now under a transient spell of oblivion. And is not our own science inquiring at this day, in pure respect for what education is doing for the brute mind, and by the simple logic that demands compensation in a future state for unrelieved miseries in this, — if the brutes are not immortal?

Origin of animal worship.

It is not easy, probably it is not possible, to discover the *special* grounds which led to the consecration of each form of animal life. The symbolism of the living world is past exhausting, and cannot be dogmatically defined. Cicero's theory that utility was the basis of animal worship is inadequate: the utility of a creature can never fully account for its becoming an object of adoration. Plutarch's divinations of its meaning in special cases are often ingenious, but as often fanciful and unsatisfactory. The faith of the Egyptians, according to Diodorus, was that the gods, having while weak found refuge from danger in animal forms, made these sacred out of gratitude, when they came to their thrones.[1] This is at least an intimation of belief in sympathetic relations and moral ties reaching from the highest to the lowest forms of life. Plutarch ridicules the legend; but his own theory goes further, and more philosophically, in the same direction. While condemning the excess to which animal worship was carried in Egypt, he touches what was doubtless the spiritual fact rudely expressed by this form of religion, in the following passage from his Isis and Osiris: "On the whole, we should approve those who honor not so much those creatures as the divine in them, and hold them as clear and natural mirrors, the instrument and art of

[1] *Diod.*, I. 86.

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the all-ordaining God. Whatever nature lives and sees and has motion in itself, and the knowledge of what is proper for itself and for others, this nature derives, as Heraclitus says, an efflux, or portion, from that Ruler whose wisdom governs all."[1] And Herodotus confirms this hint of a universal idea, when he tells us that *all animals*, both wild and domestic, were alike sacred in Egypt.[2]

Herbert Spencer's idea,[3] that the habit of *nicknaming* men from their resemblances to animals would naturally result with their descendants in the notion that these animals were in fact the ancestors, and hence deserved religious honors, goes but a little way in accounting for the piety of the ancients towards inferior creatures. The processes here described involve the very sentiment which they are adduced to explain. We might as well suppose it to be due to the equally ancient as well as modern habit of naming animals for men, either in irony or whim, as we dub dogs and birds; or for honor, like the great names of famous race horses, formed upon those of their owners, which we find recorded in old Latin inscriptions; or for protection, as the old Latian herdsmen used to name duly every sheep or heifer, sometimes after the most noted families in Italy. In fact such solutions merely illustrate the closeness of the ties which have always united man with the brute creatures. They do not go to the root of the old piety, which is explicable only as a natural instinctive disposition in man to feel respect, not alone for what is stronger, but for what is weaker than himself. The

[1] *De Iside*, LXXVI. [2] *Herod.*, II. 65.
[3] *Recent Discussions in Science.* So Lubbock, *Origin of Civiliz.*, p. 178.

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lowest tribes of savages have the custom of apologizing to the animals which they kill.[1]

The conditions required for a sympathetic and religious feeling towards the animal world, which have been described, were all supplied by the mystical faith of the Hindus in the unity of life. All creatures were one; one in the sacredness of life as such, in its very idea;[2] one in the thread of intelligence that traversed its unbroken chain of forms, and could not well be severed anywhere; and one in those delicate relations and affinities which give ground for ethical and spiritual symbolism. In these aspects, intensified by the love of suppressing distinctions and melting barriers and blending forms, the unity of life gave ample scope for the play of metempsychosis, or the transmutation of vital forces. We may perhaps define this almost universal belief of races without scientific culture as the earliest analogue of our modern doctrine of the unity and correlation of forces.

Hindu sense of the unity of life.

The transmigration-faith was, therefore, so widely spread in the elder world, because it had its roots in natural and profound aspirations. It combined the twofold intuition of immortality and moral sequence with that mystic sense of the unity of being which is a germ of the highest religious truth. And just as in early Christianity, which tended to reject the outward world, and confined its sympathy to the human and the angelic spheres, Origen had his transmigrations and "circuits" of souls, — but through those spheres only, — so in Hinduism a larger reach

Résumé.

[1] Lubbock, p. 184.

[2] See remarks on the unity of life, as conceived by the Egyptians, in H. Martineau's *Eastern Life* (p. 212), one of the most remarkable works of the present century.

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of the sense of oneness through the whole universe made transmigration a circuit that swept animal and even vegetable life also. And we are to bear in mind also, how imperfect was the sense of individuality in the mystical Hindu consciousness. It was only too easy here to infer one's private destiny from the infinite convertibility of forms in nature, the ceaseless flow, and shift, and lapse, the protean play that seemed to resolve all into one.

Relation to individual life.

How the Hindus solved the subtle question — whether that state could really be regarded as a continuation of the personal existence, in which all traces of the past were effaced in new relations of being, and only the consequences of previous conduct were retained as determining destiny — is not at all apparent. But the imagination solves all problems that perplex the understanding. A certain delight in illusion itself is the life of the transmigration mythology, and has everywhere associated it with magic, witchcraft, and the power given by talismans and spells to assume animal forms at pleasure.[1] And it is not probable that the forward look beyond death became less real and earnest for these anticipations of what to us would seem so like positive annihilation. Doubtless with the Hindus, as afterwards with Pythagoras, Plato, and the Alexandrian philosophers,[2] this whole belief hovered, in poetic dream, in the blending lights of mythology, rather than stood definite for the understanding, or in that rigid application to details which modern habits of thought would require. Yet it was not for that reason less real, or less powerful to move the fears,

[1] See Apuleius's *Golden Ass*.

[2] Simon, *Hist. de l'École d'Alexandrie*, I. 446, 590.

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the desires, or the affections of the masses of men. It was not reserved for Tertullian [1] to reveal the fact that the self-contradictions of a religious mystery make it all the more fascinating to an unreasoning faith.

Regarding all life as at heart one and the same with that which stirred within him, — and profoundly impressed by the sense of moral retribution, — the thought of immortality, too, brooding over him past escape, — it was simply natural for the hermit saint to cherish the belief that these lower creatures, with their mysterious instincts appealing to him in so many ways for protection, learning in so many ways to comprehend his thought and fall in with his habits, were the souls of his fathers and friends, who, having yielded to the power of the senses, had sunk into correspondent forms, and were now yearning back in mournfulness or remorse to the upright manhood they beheld in him. At the same time a certain awe of brute life as possibly incarnating deity, the exploration of it to find intimations of spiritual truth, of duty, and of love, prevented this actual animal world from seeming a *mere field of retribution*, and threw transmigration for its harsher penalties where Christianity also went for its hells, into vaguer *invisible* spheres, in a world that might with more propriety be called *future* than these animal purgatories could be.

Imprisoned souls.

It is important that we should note these influences which associated transmigration with other ideas and interests than those of retribution; since the natural tendency of its fatalism would be, if not counteracted, to make the present life itself appear to be merely a process of expiating past of-

Expiation and probation.

[1] "*Credo quia impossibile est*"

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fences, ignoring its invitations to future excellence. Such stern bondage to foregone lives does not enter into the theory of Christianity; its place being supplied in the creeds by a similar bondage to reward and penalty in the *future* life, through the belief that the essence of the present is but "probation." In neither case is free validity accorded to the living moment, as the sphere and opportunity of the spirit. Both in the East and the West, the affections have not failed to make earnest protest, in divers ways, against the disparagement. In this point of view the tender regard of Brahmanical religion for the animal world, in which it saw the fatalities of transmigration, is deserving of special attention.

Incidental relation to penalty.

Metempsychosis, indeed, had no necessary connection with penalty, in ancient thought as such, but covered a broad cosmical conception; namely, that of *the Unity of Life*. In Egypt, for example, it was conceived as a natural and orderly circuit of soul through the various forms of life, to return again to a human body after three thousand years.[1] And in the funereal inscriptions of that country it is nowhere found unmistakably associated with the idea of punishment.[2] Pythagoras and Empedocles allude to it as a natural rather than a retributory process. The former "recognizes the voice of his friend in the howl" of a beaten dog, and interferes to protect him. And Empedocles declared himself to have been "a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, a fish," in illustration simply of the general truth that "the soul inhabits every form of animal and plant."[3] Plato comes nearer the notion of penalty: yet in no wise of arbitrary punishment, but of natural moral gravitation. Among the

[1] Herod., II. 123. [2] Kenrick, *Anc. Egypt*, I. 403. [3] Diog. Laert., B. VIII.

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"souls that have lost their wings," those, he says, come first to full recovery who in the circuit of their human births have insight and will to *choose* the nobler lives. And he makes the same law preside in the passage through *lower* forms of animated life; each soul, after a thousand years, choosing such form, bestial or human, as it pleases.[1] This sense of moral gravitation, or of the natural consequences inherent in character, tends to interweave itself with all theories of transmigration; and we can frequently detect a natural connection between certain types of character and the special forms of animal life to which the law books consign these types after death.[2] Yet we can by no means do so as a general rule, for the reason that this is only one of many elements in the composition of the idea as a whole, which goes back upon a far deeper ground for sympathy, as well as for hopes and fears. The *unity of life*, more or less recognized by all races, made metamorphosis easy and simple; a free field for all spontaneities of human expectation and desire. Thus negro slaves transported to America sought refuge from their miseries in death, in the hope to be born again in the body of a child in their native land. Various North-American tribes believe that the soul of a dying person may be drawn into the bosom of a sterile woman, or blown by the breath into that of the nearest relative, and so come again to birth in the way that the receiver desires.[3] It is of course needless to do more than refer to the beautiful mythology of metamorphosis in which Greek poetry and Hindu fable so thoroughly delighted, in illustration of the freedom

[1] Phædrus, c. 61.
[2] See *Yâjnâvalkya*, III. 210.
[3] Brinton, *Myths of New World*, p. 253.

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of this field of human sympathy from all necessary relation to retributory suffering.

In Hindu poetry, every creature that appears in the vast tropical jungle of illusion through which you are led is a soul in disguise; a mask assumed by magic spell or in personal caprice, for purposes good or evil, or in pure love of changing one's form, and wandering through the wide chambers of life. The special genius of the poet is shown in the surprise effected by the fall of the mask, the swift escape into a new one; in the flit from life to life, as of a spirit everywhere at home; and in the swift revulsions of pleasure and pain caused by the play of such illusion upon human emotions. And this takes off the edge of the tragic *furore* which makes so large a part of these old epics, and which is carried to such a pitch of destructiveness that nothing but a constant sense of illusion could render it endurable. Here too, as in Veda and Upanishad, the perpetual lesson is the indestructibility of life, the resilience of the soul from death, and its power to pass unharmed through all the fires of elemental change.

Hindu theory of penalty.

Yet, as has been already said, one inevitable tendency of the contemplative life in India was to regard this convertibility of forms through the oneness of being, in its specially moral aspects. The poets who unfolded laws of spiritual emancipation, and the ascetics who sought to fulfil them, would naturally emphasize penalty in connection with bestial transformation, assigning the future of human vices and passions to those forms of animal life to which they seemed to bear a resemblance. And the point most worth our notice is, that, looking upon life in so

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many of these forms as symbolical at least of punishment, they yet showed a tenderness towards them which could have no other cause than the desire to alleviate this remedial pain, and to help on the process of purgation, that the imprisoned souls might at last be freed.

I speak of the Hindu Inferno as remedial: I do not deny that the punishment of the worst is often spoken of as if final. Herder's idea of a threefold division of the forms of transmigration into ascending, descending, and circular, will not serve as a basis for the classification of systems. In the Hindu faith we find all three combined. But the result of this very fact is that the idea of *ascent and final unity with God* is predominant. The very notion of circuit and return implies that the basis of penalty is preservation; and the absorption of the whole into a divine unity points clearly to an instinctive resolution of evil into good.

The Hindu imagination indeed, like Christian Dante's, brooded over the capabilities of penal suffering in the spiritual organization of man.[1] Manu represents the vital spirit of the wicked, as furnished with a coarser body, expressly provided with nerves susceptible of extreme torment; while that of the good shall have a body formed of pure elementary particles, as closely related to delight in the celestial spheres.[2] And according as the qualities of goodness, passion, or darkness prevail, do these spirits become deities, or men, or beasts, after death. In proportion as sensual desires are indulged, does the acuteness of these sheathed and preparatory senses become intensified.[3]

[1] For the dismal record of transmigration penalties, see *Manu*, ch. xii. and *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 206–215.

[2] *Manu*, XII. 20, 40.

[3] Compare Buckle's account of Calvinism, *Hist. of Civil.*, vol. ii.

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Its limits.

Eastern imagination herein, as in other matters, allows itself freer scope to paint the horrors of penalty, from the fact that it is so unconscious of any thing like literal and practical intention; a palliative more or less admissible in the case of any religion, when we would interpret its dogmas of future retribution. In addition to this last, perhaps questionable, protective element, a certain tenderness and plasticity of the natural sensibilities comes in, to save the Hindus from affirming everlasting penalty as a complete and conscious principle of faith.

To say nothing of the inevitable return of the universe, through whatsoever "wombs of pain," to the bosom of the Supreme, emphasized by the mystical Vedânta as the substance of faith, the Law of Manu itself in one passage distinctly affirms the "restoration of the wicked."[1] Yâjnavalkya also describes the return of the vicious through these purgations to their original better status and to new opportunity.[2]

At worst this Inferno of Transmigration, with all its fantastic torments and their inconceivable durations, has not so relentless a spirit towards the offender as is involved in the developed Christian dogma of endless punishment. And it is by no means so likely to suggest itself to the reader of the Vedas, the philosophies, the epics, or the dramas, that deity was held to be glorified by the joy of saints over these penal miseries of the wicked, as that a certain compassionate love, as of a protector, and deliverer, was thought due from man to the lower creatures; though they must have been regarded as representatives of a doom justly inflicted upon human vice.

[1] *Manu*, XII. 22. See Elphinstone, quoted in Allen's *India*, p. 430.
[2] *Yâjnav.*, III. 217, 218.

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On the other hand, as the system became more and more elaborate, it must, like analogous schemes in other religions, have lent abundant material for the purposes of the priesthood; whose control over these tremendous mysteries of a future life secured them mastery over mind and conscience in the present.

Bishop Heber, in view of these and kindred superstitions, denounced the Hindu religion as the worst he ever heard of. Yet he has himself paid high tributes to the virtues that could grow in its soil. And the records of Christianity might well make us beware of judging a whole faith by its least creditable fruits. It may help to a fairer judgment, even of metempsychosis, to recall the fine Mahâbhârata legend of King Judishthira; who, after the woful strife of kindred chiefs is over, striving to reach separation from the world by journeying to the holy mountain, and seeing all his noble brothers fall by the way, because not redeemed by their sufferings from pride, or ambition, or overweening affections, reaches the presence of Indra, followed only by his dog: heaven opens before him, but he will not enter without this faithful companion.

"Away with that felicity whose price is to abandon the faithful.
Yon poor creature, in fear and distress, hath trusted in my power to save it.
Not for e'en life itself will I break my plighted word."

Admitted by Indra, he finds his lost relatives are not in heaven, but consigned to the regions of torment; whither descending he bids the angel leave him, that he may share their misery; then wakes to find the spectacle an illusion, to test the constancy of his love.[1]

Hardly less significant is the mythical account, in

[1] *Mahâbh.*, VI. The story may be found in Alger's *Oriental Poetry*, with a striking translation of the passage.

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the same epic, of the renewal of human life itself after the great Deluge of Manu, through the tenderness of this saint towards the lower creatures. He saves a little fish pursued by larger ones, which proves to be Brahmâ in disguise; and after transferring it from place to place as it grows, till at last the Ganges cannot hold it, he receives from its gratitude the reward of his labors. The now gigantic fish warns him of the coming destruction of mankind, and guides his ark through the great waters, from which he emerges to repeople the earth.

Spiritual significance.

We have indicated the origin of this profound Oriental belief, in genuine religious and moral instincts. How far other experiences of a more subtle character may have helped to suggest it, — such as the peculiar sense of reminiscence and recognition, as of former states of being, which physicists ascribe to the double action of the brain, — it is now impossible to determine. But, whatever its relation to a future life, transmigration, or at least metamorphosis, is certainly a spiritual fact, true of the present life. "Be not," says Sir Thomas Browne, in his quaint way, "under any brutal metempsychosis while thou livest and walkest about erectly under the form of man. Leave it not disputable at last, since thou art a composition of man and beast, how thou hast predominantly passed thy days." "When men lose their virtue," asks Boethius still more plainly, "do they not also lose their human nature? You cannot esteem him to be a man, whom you see transformed by his vices Whoever leaves off to be virtuous ceases to be human. And, since he cannot attain to a divine nature, he is turned into a beast." [1]

[1] *Consol. of Philosophy*, IV. iv.

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That the lower types of animal life are somehow taken up as constituent elements of the human is an instinct of sentiment and a fact of scientific observation. Embryological stages alone might almost warrant a literal truth to that old mystical philosophy which makes every man carry a beast within his body, "wherewith, being plagued or else amused, the captive soul doth bring itself into a bestial figure."[1] Dire possibilities suggest themselves in the reflection that we are equally ignorant how the brute came to exist outside us, as an express image of our rude instincts, and how it came to appear within us, as larval phase and moral quality. That there are limits in human nature to actual transmutation in the descending line may fairly be presumed, at least so long as science fails, with all its intimations and inferences, to show us even the *animal* man in the act of *ascending* out of the brute. And more than this: our personality is a spiritual essence that resists solution; a mystery as indefinable by science as by superstition; a secret that has not yielded either to the dream of metempsychosis or to the study of specific origin, to divination of the future or to exploration of the past. Darwin may track it this way, or Manu that: the subtle genius will not be hunted to its lair.

But the interweaving of the higher and lower lives, the divine and the bestial, remains: it was as real to the earlier as to the later consciousness of man, that he is the microcosm of life, from the god to the worm. There was evermore a warning instinct, the ceaseless providence of a secret whisper, "Beware the beast thou bearest within."

[1] Jacob Behmen's *Mysterium Magnum*.

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Half in insight, half in fear, he wove his impression into dogma; and on that arose metempsychosis. Its colossal system of powers and penalties weighed heavily on his soul. For its round of ages and forms was a bitter one to travel; its claim for all types of life to exercise influence on his destinies was an overwhelming demand; and his constant yearning was to escape this circulation through the manifold stages of existence, and to mount at once by a directer path to immortal good. Brahmanism and Buddhism, with their kindred philosophies have sought to provide such ways of escape, as Christianity also has had its fine evasions of its own dismal lore of eternal punishment.

But metempsychosis had its nobler side. It associated itself with all the tenderness of yearning and regret. It served to bring out man's kindly sentiments, and expand them through the whole world of animated forms. And it must have quickened the æsthetic and poetic sense by teaching him to trace the paths of that tender mystery of creative genius, which is one and the same in the weaving of a sparrow's nest and the transitions of human birth and death.

Sanity of nature.

I return to the point which I proposed to illustrate. This circuit of metempsychosis is the clearest possible evidence, for our study of the early world, before practical science was, that man cannot withdraw himself, even by religious influence, from a saving balance, inherent in his own spiritual tendencies and demands. The Hindu, dreamer as he was, was forced, as we have seen, to recognize the visible world he repelled, and to find religious purpose

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in its forms and forces, after all. He could not make the living universe flow into the divine life, without acknowledging the flow of deity through the whole living universe. Such the sanity of nature, justifier alike of soul and sense.

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VII.

RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALITY.

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RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALITY.

CHRISTIANITY indulges the hope of absorbing other historical religions, and sinking their sacred names and symbols in its own. This anticipation demands our notice, as bearing directly on the interests of Universal Religion.

Christian expectations.

It means, substantially, that Christianity has confident faith in its own adequacy to meet universal needs. A like self-reliance is to be noted in all great historic religions. They would not be religions, had they not this instinct of universality. In proportion to the earnestness of its conviction has each refused to hide its treasure, and hastened forth with the glad tidings of one all-sufficing gospel. Judaism made the world ring with its cry to the nations to come up and serve Jehovah. Buddhism has swept a third of mankind into its wide-open folds of brotherhood. Confucius sways an empire of empires, and China entitles herself the "Central Kingdom." The religions of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, — religions of the Desert as they are, summoning men apart to intense concentration on personal needs and exaltations, to a burning thirst for living waters, — have transformed their passionate egotism into a boundless absolutism, claiming divine

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right by "special revelation" to impose their formulas upon all mankind. Even Persian Bâbism parcels out the nations of the earth already, by anticipation, among its ambitious chieftains.[1]

All great religions involve this assurance of a right to master the world; and the method is now the sword, now love and sacrifice, now prophetic affirmation, now the proclamation of a dogma or a name. However delusive the hope, there is a deeper truth than its own exclusiveness allows it to apprehend, seeking expression in its dream.

For what all these religions are really affirming, however unconsciously, is the adequacy of the human faculties to find whatever, as spiritual forces, they require. The confessors of each faith hold their own mode of satisfaction to be valid for all men, only because they know that all men have one nature. But this implies that the power and the right of obtaining such satisfactory solution cannot be limited to themselves. So that when the instinct of expansion which impels them comes to be really comprehended, all beliefs that assume the common human nature to be inadequate should drop away; and all exclusive claims on the part of distinctive religious traditions and symbols to represent it should be resigned.

And this time has now come, more fully and effectively than at any former period, in the progress of mutual recognition between the diverse religions of mankind. Such claims are now a real bar to sympathy, and can form no element of that unity which all our experience expects. All distinctive religions — and Christianity in the whole history of its relations with Judaism and other faiths has assumed itself to be

[1] Gobineau, p. 193.

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one of these — are fragmentary and imperfect: if not in certain ideal aspects, they are yet positively so when regarded as alternatives to each other; that is, when claiming the right of supplanting and excluding each other's definite names, symbols, and historical associations in the world's regard. Civilization acknowledges its debt to each, respects the validity of each as aspiration on the same ample basis of a common spiritual nature; but holds them all in abeyance before those universal ideas and that complete human culture, of which their specialities, whether personal, dogmatical, or mythological, were but germs. No distinctive religion can fulfil the universal functions of our civilization. The plea that it is itself *identical* with civilization, or exclusively entitled to speak in its name, cannot now be entered even by the best of these special organs of the religious sentiment. It cannot monopolize truths implicitly contained in all great forms of faith; and, however natural the desire to make it cover all that is for the "glory of God," it cannot ignore the history of man. Here the zeal of the Christian disciple confounds things different and unequal. The terms Christianity and civilization are not identical; since civilization reports the whole experience of mankind, whereof this concentration on the person of Jesus, whether in its recognized or its heretical forms, is but a fragment. Distinctive Christianity has in fact had little or no success outside the Aryan family of nations; and in the most advanced of these it is losing its hold, and passing on into a freer theism. Only the blindness of an exclusive faith can expect that the hundreds of millions of the Oriental world, now brought to our doors, are to bow down to the name of Jesus, and adopt Christian symbolism; and this at a

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time when historical criticism is claiming for Judaism much of that very ethical and spiritual wisdom which has hitherto been supposed original with the prophet of Nazareth. As well expect Christendom to worship God under the sole name of Brahma, or Mahomet as His only prophet.

The very fact that Christianity makes exclusive claims in the name of a central historical person, to say nothing of positive church or creed, proves that it cannot become the universal religion. Nothing indeed is more irrational than to expect old civilizations to exchange their ancestral scriptures and mediatorial names *for those of other races*. It is as nearly impossible as any change can well be. They will escape their own idolatries in this kind, not to fall into others, but to be freed into that religion of universal and eternal truth which transcends all such limitations. "This is my religion," said a Siamese nobleman to a Christian missionary: "to be so little tied to the world that I can leave it without regret; to keep my heart sound; to live doing no injustice to any, but deeds of compassion to all." To convince him that he had so sinned as to need salvation through Jesus Christ was beyond the power of the proselyter, who succeeded only in making him the more certain that his own religion was the better of the two.[1]

Inadequacy of distinctive religions.

I can conceive no reason for believing that either the Jews, the Chinese, or the Hindus are destined to become members of what is called the "Body of Christ." The Spirit has something better in store for mankind than to hang fastened on one historical name or idealization. The various religions, like the various races, are brought together at

[1] Bowring's *Journal of Embassy to Siam*, I. 378.

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last, to rebuke conceit of special claims, and secure the largest appreciation of God in Man. To stand where this appreciation is possible is the first of duties. "The leaves of God's book," says a Moslem proverb, "are the religious persuasions." It is time to read that book with open heart and mind. And there is no enforcement of the lesson more convincing than that which is coming in the almost total failure of missionary effort in the great empires of the East.

Christian missions in India.

Poor Abbé Dubois, after thirty years' devoted missionary labor in India, not only pronounced his belief that the Hindus could not be converted, and that Christianity had done its work in the direction of heathenism, — but confessed, "with shame and confusion," that he "did not remember any Hindu who had embraced Christianity from conviction and from disinterested motives," and that those converts who continued in the church were "the very worst in his flock." That the Protestant missions have even less to boast of than the Catholic, in the matter of past success or present promise, will be sufficiently clear to any one who glances over the pages of Tennent, Anderson, or Kaye.

I do not propose to enter into this special topic further than to notice what is generally admitted, — that the converts to Christianity in India come almost exclusively from among that miserable portion of the population which is naturally open to the influences of any missionary enterprise, of whatsoever faith. Mr. Wheeler says[1] that the current of national religious ideas, "flowing in channels unknown and unappreciated by the Western world, has rendered Christianity less acceptable to the civilized Hindus of the plains than to

[1] *Hist. of India*, II. 661.

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the barbarous aborigines who inhabit the hills." "Of the one hundred and twelve thousand converts in the whole of India," wrote Monier Williams in 1861, "ninety-one thousand have been obtained in the south, and of these not more than three thousand belong to the race of Hindus proper. The greatest missionary success has been among the Shanars, a low caste not Hindus by race or religion, whose business is to extract the juice used for toddy from the palmyra palm."[1] "In all Bengalese converts not a Mohammedan is on record."[2]

On the intelligent and reflecting class Christianity makes little or no impression. "Though the Hindus respect the precepts of Christianity," says Miss Carpenter very candidly,[3] "and hold the morality of the Bible in high esteem, to the reception of Christianity they feel insuperable difficulties. Their faith in their own sacred writings having been shaken, they do not willingly accept any other revelation," — naturally enough, we should say. "It is impossible for them to accept miracles under any circumstances," — a still more obvious necessity, having had quite enough to do with them already. "And they regard a Christian convert as a renegade," — very much as a Christian sect regards those who abandon it for another, it may be. But in these and other ways this estimable philanthropist, whose efforts for the practical education of the Hindus, and especially for the emancipation of women from their present deplorable condition, are deserving of all praise, endeavors to explain the undeniable failure of missionary efforts among the better classes in India.

[1] *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit*, p. 39.
[2] Tennent's *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 64.
[3] *Six Months in India*, II. 71, 72.

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Mr. Kaye points to another serious obstacle to these efforts, which simply proves what intelligent Hindus have had good chances to learn, the vanity of all pretensions on the part of special religions to monopolize "saving" power. "During the first century of our connection with India, not only was nothing done for Christianity, but much against it. We found the name of Christian little better than synonyme for devil. Compared with the lives of our own people, those of the natives really appeared to glow with excellent morality."[1] If it be true that, as an intelligent American traveller observes, "India is rising from degradation through intercourse with Christian nations," while yet "the dealings of England with India have been any thing but Christian," — it is certainly natural that the Hindus should discover that the good which Western civilization is bringing them does not depend on the power of its special religious doctrines over the conduct of their confessors. What divine authority to rule men can they ascribe to a religion which forbids caste, — while the Englishman, pluming himself on its monopoly of God, contemns their wisest men for their heathen birth and culture, or expects every Hindu to "make him a salaam" as he passes by?

Absurd and irrational dogmas, assumptions of divine right to prescribe forms of belief and personal allegiance, are as readily detected by intelligent Hindus as by other men; and, when enforced by the threat of eternal punishment by a foreign God for non-belief in a Christ who is made their representative, must be in the highest degree repulsive and even contemptible to all thoughtful people in India, whether

[1] *Christianity in India*, pp. 41, 43.

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believers in the national religion or not. I pass over this cause of missionary failure, as too obvious to be dwelt on.

The discord of Christian sects probably stands in the way of missionary success as much as the character of Christian dogma. When the Protestant preachers represent the Catholic as little better than the heathen, the Hindus honestly ask, "Why should we become Christians, when you tell us that three-quarters the Christian world have adopted a creed no better than our own?"[1] The Jesuits forged a Veda, which they called Ezourvedam. The Dutch cut off the nose of the statue of St. Thomas the apostle, presumed founder of Christianity in India, knocked it full of nails, and shot it out of a mortar. Denouncing each other's creeds, Christians have been ready to make money out of the heathenism they agree to pronounce fatal to the soul. "Little brass images of Krishna before which Hindu women bow come from Birmingham."[2] The East India Company took tribute from the festivals of Jagannâth. Add to the pronounced enmity between Catholics and Protestants the mutual animosities of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and the bitter strife waged by the sects on the soil of India and Ceylon, and the expectations of the Christian Church will appear preposterous indeed.[3]

Deep roots of native faith.

Mr. Wheeler says that the influence of the epics alone on the masses is infinitely greater than that of the Bible on modern Europe. They are represented at village festivals; their sto-

[1] Bevon, *Thirty Years in India*, II. 290; Tennent's *Ceylon*, I. 545.
[2] Carleton's *New Way round the World*, p. 165.
[3] See Tennent's *Christianity in Ceylon*.

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ries are chanted aloud at almost every social gathering, and indeed form the topic of conversation amongst Hindus generally. "They are all that the library, the newspaper, and the Bible are to the European; whilst the books themselves are regarded with a superstitious reverence which far exceeds that which has been accorded to any other revelation, real or supposed. [?] It is the common belief that to peruse or merely to listen to the perusal of the Mahâbhârata or the Râmâyana will ensure prosperity in this world and eternal happiness hereafter. At the same time they are cherished by the Hindus as national property, and as containing the records of the deeds of their forefathers in the days when the gods held frequent communion with the children of men."[1]

In truth, though there has been scarcely an age in Hindu history which has not been marked by religious ferment and change, no revolution of this kind has ever made a deep or lasting impression on the Hindu mind which has not been of native origin. So vigorous is the natural growth that it refuses to be grafted. According to the statements in Anderson's recent work on Foreign Missions, the thirty societies interested in the conversion of India, with their five hundred and eighty missionaries and four hundred stations, have, after this long period of British sway over these vast multitudes, resulted in about fifty thousand communicants, and two hundred and sixty thousand "nominal Christians," with one hundred thousand children in the mission schools.[2] And this in a population of one hundred and fifty millions! Perhaps even these figures are too large. Mr. Ward (India and Hindus) estimated in 1851 "that the whole num-

[1] *Hist. of India*, I. 4.

[2] Also Sir J. Bowring's *Journal*, I. 352, 378.

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ber of converts, exclusive of the Roman Catholics, cannot exceed ten thousand." We can hardly wonder that the Calcutta "Christian Observer," describing a conference of missionaries, held in that city in 1855, should admit that "an air of sombreness overspread the whole, and that the lesson it emphatically conveyed was that of showing how little we could do."[1]

Present religious reform in India.

After this review of Hindu philosophy and faith, we cannot wonder that at the present time, as ages ago in the great Buddhist reformation, the religious genius of this race asserts its capacity for progress. The influence of Western missions in setting aside Hindu for Christian forms of religious association and doctrine has been infinitesimal; but the all-sufficient germs of pure theism contained in the national mind, and its normal activity, from earliest times, are now bearing fresh fruit, in efforts to overthrow the degenerate polytheism of the modern Hindus and the miserable social institutions that accompany it. It is on these purely Hindu associations that many sects have recently arisen in India, which denounce the popular divinities and the social inequality and barbarism now prevalent; "substituting a moral for a ceremonial code, and addressing their prayers to the only God."[2]

Rammohun Roy.

It was the ancient faith of the Vedas and the Upanishads that Rammohun Roy sought to restore, when in the early part of the present century he attempted to purify the religious life of his people. He translated the substance of this grand theism of his fathers from its original Sanskrit into the languages of the masses; unfolding a philosophy and piety which

[1] *Missionary Intellig.*, VIII. 288.
[2] Wilson, *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, II. 76.

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amply justified him in declaring that "the superstitious practices which deform the Hindu religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates."[1] "Though Vedas, Purânas, and Tantras, frequently assert the existence of a plurality of gods and goddesses, and prescribe modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they also have declared in a hundred other places that these passages are to be taken in a figurative sense."[2] In his subsequent controversy with Dr. Marshman, who depreciated his faith, upon the ground that he did not accept Christianity in its trinitarian form, he manfully maintains not only the substantial truth and purity of his Hindu theism, but even for the low popular conceptions of it equal reasonableness with those affirmed in the Christian trinity. If Christians affirm God to be One, though in three persons, "they ought in conscience to refrain from accusing Hindus of Polytheism; for every Hindu, we daily observe, confesses the unity of the Godhead," even while making it consist of "millions of substances assuming offices" according to the various forms of "Divine Providence."[3] It should be noted that Rammohun Roy, while devoutly admiring the "Precepts of Jesus," which he translated into his native tongue, did not admit them to be in any wise inconsistent with the spiritual faith which he drew from native fountains; and that he never "broke with Hinduism nor adopted Christianity by any *outward* act or rite, even to the directions given for his burial;"[4] and this while in sympathy with the English Unitarians in their devotion to the person and teachings of Jesus. And, even

[1] Pref. to *The Vedant*, or *Resolution of the Veds*.
[2] Ibid., p. 86.
[3] *Appeals in Defence of "Precepts of Jesus,"* p. 172.
[4] Frances Power Cobbe, *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 69.

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while carefully avoiding any thing like denial of the New Testament miracles, he was equally careful to insist on the impossibility of using them as evidences of Christianity, to the mind of a people who had records of much more wonderful miracles, handed down, upon what they regarded as unquestionable authority, from their own traditional saints.[1]

Subsequent reformers.

There can be no question that the personal isolation of Rammohun Roy in his own country, and the hostility aroused by his zeal for religious and social reform, drove him into closer relations with Christianity as a specific faith than his *spiritual* needs required. The numerous religious reformers, who have sprung up in the same line of thought since his time in India, have not followed his lead in this respect; having found ample grounds for their movement in the national mind and its traditional instincts, while advancing beyond its bibliolatry and traditionalism into the domains of free, universal religion. Thus the Râja Râdhâkânta Deva Bahâdur,—whose moral attainment was as remarkable as his intellectual, the earliest native helper of the education of woman, and the first to provide school books for the people, of whom it was said that he not only never made an enemy, but earned the love and admiration of all—remained a Hindu in his religious faith.[2]

The theistic movement.

Most writers and observers have recognized a strong disposition in the modern Hindus to independent religious criticism, to rationalistic investigation and a free acceptance of the principles of natural religion. They have described it in various

[1] *Appeals*, &c, p. 226. Rev. J. Scott Porter, in his funeral discourse, affirms that Rammohun Roy, before his death, expressed his entire faith in the New Testament miracles. *Last Days of Ram. Roy in England*, p. 226.

[2] See *Proceedings of R. A. S. of Bengal* for May, 1867.

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ways, each from his own point of view. Thus Dr. Allen tells us, in his valuable work on India, that there are many deists among the educated Hindus, many who have no faith in the Śâstras; that their libraries are furnished with English deistical works; that they discuss Christianity and treat Christian doctrines with levity; that they control the native press, and propose an eclectic system of faith from all religions, adapted to the present state of knowledge.[1] According to Dr. Anderson's work on Eastern Missions, "the Hindus have discovered what it is to be intellectually free; and, confounding distinctions of right and wrong, antagonize the truth of God [*i.e.*, the dogmatic theology of the missionaries]. There is cause for anxiety lest educated Hindus, ceasing to be idolaters, become stereotyped in skepticism."[2] Editorial tourists notice that "the educated Hindu usually throws over idols, and becomes free-thinker; that he does not adopt Christianity, which would lead to ostracism, but rationalism rather; since by rejecting myths and superstitions he does not lose social position."[3] These subtle brains slip easily out of all nets of conversion. The earliest result of the Anglo-Indian college of Calcutta, an institution for the instruction of the Hindus in English branches of study, was the importation and rapid sale of a thousand copies of Paine's "Age of Reason," whose market value quintupled on the hands of the sellers.[4] Miss Carpenter reports in general terms that "educated Hindus acknowledge One God and Heavenly Father," and that they always responded to her "appeal to Him." "The *Prathana Samaj*" [pure theism],

[1] Allen's *India*, pp. 581–584. [2] Anderson, pp. 237, 238.
[3] Carleton's *Round the World*, p. 209. [4] *Christian Missionary Intelligencer*, IX. 98.

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says a Bombay journal, "is destined to be the religion of the whole world."[1]

Fusion of religions.

We must here take into view the inevitable result of that intermixture of races and beliefs of which modern India has been the theatre. Islam has doubtless done much to concentrate religious feeling, and give it definiteness of moral and democratic purpose. The full religious toleration established by the Mogul emperor, Akbar, opened India in the sixteenth century to the largest freedom of speculation and faith. Akbar was a believer by conviction in the rights of mind and the sympathies of religions; and no nobler words than his, to this effect, have been recorded by history. Under his government that legacy of thirty centuries, the old Aryan schism, ceased; and Persians and Indians were reunited in a common worship. He was the great peacemaker, the "guardian of mankind." On account of the free discussion of beliefs by the learned men of all religions whom he brought together to speak before the people, the custom of publicly reading comments on the Koran was laid aside, and the sciences became current in its place.[2] It was said of him that "he mingled the best and purest part of every religion for his own faith." His preference was for the Zoroastrian system; but we see in him quite as strong evidence of the capabilities of Oriental Islam for religious hospitality and fusion. Of this tendency the Dabistân, composed in the next century after Akbar, is a wonderful monument; and its charming review of all the great religions of the time is conceived in the broadest and most genial spirit. Its author, Mohsan

[1] *Six Months in India*, II. 70, 71.

[2] *Dabistân*, ch. x.

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Fâne, declares truly that he writes to give the "outward and inward meaning of all beliefs, free of all party spirit, without envy, hate, or scorn."

"The varieties of the rules of prophets proceed only from the diversity of names. The time of a prophet is a universal one, having neither before nor after, neither morn nor eve."[1]

The fusion of Semitic monotheism with Aryan dualism and pantheism in the East has developed a degree of religious universality yet to be appreciated. The Purânas, especially the Vishnu and the Bhâgavata, have in many respects spiritualized the popular creeds and mythologies of India, and absorbed them into vast mystical unities with boundless scope of affinity, in accordance with the genius of the race. This wealth of material for a native breadth of religious sympathy is strikingly illustrated by the later "Vaishnava" sects, which are widely extended in Central and Northern India, and of which a fuller account will be given in another section of this work. Those especially of Râmânand, Kabir, Dâdu, have been described by Professor Wilson in his very interesting essay on the Religious Sects of the Hindus. As might be expected from their origin in the traditions of the old worship of Vishnu, these schools for the most part teach universal toleration, and have sought to unite the different race-elements in Hindustan in religious sympathy. This was eminently the aim of Nânak also, the founder of the Sikh religion, in the fifteenth century, whose peaceful and humane philosophy combined an almost Vedantic mysticism with practical benevolence and brotherhood. It was only under the influence of later *gurus*, or teachers, and of

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. xii.

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Mohammedan persecution, that the Sikhs were transformed into a nation of soldiers, with aspirations for material conquests. Nânak said: —

"He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only a good Mohammedan whose life is pure." — "Be true, and thou shalt be free. Truth belongs to thee, and thy success to the Creator."[1]

The Sikh Bible says: —

"God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done."

"Heed not the command of the impure man, though among the nobles; but of one who is pure among the most despised will Nânak become the footstool."

"Put on the armor that harms no one. Let thy coat of mail be reason, and convert thy enemies to friends. All founders of sects are mortal. God alone endures for ever. Men may read Vedas and Korans, but only in Him is salvation."

It was said that, "when men listened to Nânak, they forgot that mankind had any religion but one." So when Kabir died, the Dabistân tells us, both Hindus and Mohammedans assembled, the ones to bury, the others to burn his body, each supposing him to have been of their own faith. At last a fakir stepped into the midst and said, "Kabir was a holy man, independent of both religions; but, having during his life satisfied you, he must also, after death, meet your approval," — whence the proverb: —

"Live so as to be claimed after death to be burned by the Hindus, and to be buried by the Moslem."

The followers of Bâbâ-lâl, who unite elements of the Vedânta with the mystical devotion of the Sufis, adoring One God without confinement to forms of worship, say, "God is the creed of those who love

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. ii.

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Him; and to do good is best, for the followers of every faith."[1]

The fine speculative quality of the Hindu brain is in natural affinity with the freedom of inquiry which animates the present age. This native genius, quickened by opportunities of dealing with the largest philosophy and boldest criticism of modern time, and finding abundant analogies for these in the literature already familiar to it, is rapidly emancipating Hinduism from the degradation and lethargy of the past. Frances Power Cobbe, a most competent authority on the subject, has called attention to the facts, that "the common tendency of conquered nations to adopt the religion of the victorious race exists very slightly, if at all, among the educated Hindus;" and that, in the words of the "Contemporary Review," there is even "a growing silent alienation of the younger generation of Englishmen in India from Christian worship and communion;" and this, too, among those "whose lives are pure, who exhibit least of the worldly self-seeking spirit, who are among the most thoughtful and cultivated."[2] Whatever feelings these facts may excite in the missionary, or distinctively Christian mind, nothing could afford more impressive proof of the power of native Hindu genius, speculative and religious, to regenerate the national character by its own natural methods, without adopting an alien form of religious faith. It is finding its own way out of special exclusive confessions into the open day of Universal Religion. It has been said that the Gâyatri, the morning and evening prayer of all Brahmans, "might with slight alteration be converted into a Christian prayer." It needs *no* alteration whatever to become a part of

Ethnic qualities.

[1] Wilson, I. 352.

[2] *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 64.

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the free Bible of Humanity. "Let us meditate on the excellent Light in the divine Sun, and may his beams illumine our minds."

The Brahma-Samaj.

There is unmistakable evidence of all this in the growth of the *Brahma-Samaj*, or "Church of the One God;" certainly a movement, which for noble and generous purpose, for profound earnestness of religious faith, and for significance in the present epoch of intellectual and spiritual transition, is unsurpassed, and which deserves the name of inspiration as truly as any thing in history. By this statement I do not mean to exaggerate any of its actual merits, any more than I would affirm the absence of defects which a distance of half the circumference of the earth may hide from us. Its essential meaning and purpose demand no less a tribute than I have accorded it. Here is a perfected theistic faith, growing up on purely Hindu grounds, and rapidly expanding throughout India; inheriting the grandest affirmations of the Vedic Scriptures, yet nowise bound thereby; blending the old mystic fervor with the purest practical morality; aiming at the entire religious and social regeneration of India, at the abolition of caste and polytheism, at the elevation of woman, through the reform of marriage customs and domestic servitudes, and the largest opportunity of culture and occupation. Its spirit is thoroughly democratic, and it demands of the Brahman that he throw away at once the sacred thread that designates the twice-born man of the elect caste, and consecrate himself to the service "not of the wise and gifted, whose lives have already been a boon, but to the poor, the stupid, and the sinful." Originating in the pious scholarship and benevolence of Rammohun Roy, in his effort to return to the sub-

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stance of the old Vedic faith, and to engraft thereon the universal ethics of love and justice, it has placed itself on a broader basis than even he expected; recognizing that the aim should be not to become merged in Christianity as a specific faith, nor in the centralization of religious union in a discipleship of Jesus; but, in the words of its present enlightened and enthusiastic leader, in his letter to the "Free Religious Association" of American liberals, to "propagate the universal and absolute religion, whose cardinal doctrines are the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and which accepts the truths of all scriptures and honors the prophets of all nations;" and by "promoting the intellectual, moral, and social reformation of individuals and nations, to make theism the religion of life."[1]

Keshub Chunder Sen.

The practical earnestness and profound conviction of this remarkable man has done much to bring to clear and strong purpose the vague yearnings of the intelligent classes in India, and direct the ferment of reform into productive channels. Unwearied in his missionary and literary efforts, founding churches all over India, and inspiring his co-laborers by the pulpit and the pen for ten years past, he has found the fields ripe for his harvests, and with prophetic faith recognizes the tendency of the age in India to be, as elsewhere in the civilized world, towards free and natural theism. Upwards of sixty of these churches already exist in the various provinces of India; earnest missionaries, supported by voluntary contributions, are preaching these pure ethics and spiritual intuitions to the masses; several periodicals are maintained and widely circulated; and,

[1] See *Proceedings of Free Relig. Assoc. for* 1868 (Boston, Adams & Co.).

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if we may accept the testimony of one who has earned the highest credence on subjects of this nature, "all the educated youth of India (save a certain number wholly skeptical in their tendencies) are in sentiment favorable to Brahmoism, and gradually fall into its ranks as the indulgence or death of their fathers may permit them to abandon Hindu rites."[1] The "skepticism" here referred to is, in most cases, the free rationalism of positive science, or that large personal liberty that finds its sphere outside all church organizations.

Promise of India.

Thus approaches the final justification for whatsoever has been of best promise in Eastern wisdom and faith; a new dawn after centuries of comparative death and night. It is nothing less than such a grand form of religion as this, very far in advance of the prevailing creeds of Christendom, that now reaches its spiritual hands across the seas of race and mind — just as the electric wire is encircling the material globe, just as all the relations of trade and science and politics are becoming œcumenical — to our own natural religion in the West, now escaping the Christian and the Judaic dogma, as itself has the Brahmanical, upon the ground of those inherent, inalienable, and immutable relations that unite Man with God. It is through such elements as these that the future faith of the world is germinating in the mysterious unities of progress; the new spiritual climate of science and freedom; the communion of races and beliefs.

I gladly add the ardent words in which Chunder Sen announces this common prophecy of the East and the West: —

[1] F. P. Cobbe, *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 78. Similar testimony was given by the students of the Presbyterian Colleges in Calcutta, in reply to questions put them in turn by the correspondent of the *London Times*.

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"The future religion of the world which I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth and assume a distinctive and peculiar character. No country will borrow or mechanically imitate the religion of another country; but from the depths of the life of each nation its future church will grow up. In common with all other nations and communities, we shall embrace the theistic worship, creed, and gospel of the future church. But we shall do this on a strictly national and Indian style. One religion shall be acknowledged by all men; one God shall be worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the world; the same spirit of faith and love shall pervade all hearts; all nations shall dwell together in the Father's house; yet each shall have its own peculiar and free mode of action. There shall, in short, be unity of spirit, but diversity of forms; one body, but different limbs; one vast community with members laboring in different ways, and according to their respective resources and peculiar tastes, to advance their common cause, 'the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man.'"

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III.

BUDDHISM.

I.

SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

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SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

IN defining the Hindu mind as the Brain of the East, I have not intended to deny that it possesses muscular and nervous elements also. These are relatively in defect, while the cerebral is in excess. But nature always seeks true balance. This brain is of Aryan substance; and we have already found its quality suggestive of most forms of Indo-European development, many-sided as that is. We have seen that the practical energy which belongs to this family of nations under cooler skies is hinted by many vigorous reactions both in earlier and later times upon the mystical quietism of Indian life. Of this nature were the belief in active incarnation from age to age, as often as virtue needed reinstatement by discipline, strength, or love; the interest felt by Brahman hermits in living creatures; the sympathetic realism of poets in describing the more subtle phenomena of nature. Such aptitudes are the more striking, in view of their association with philosophies which turn the visible world into dream. We may add to these the national taste for dramatic and gnomic literature, the exuberance of its flow into proverbs, fables, and plays, as well as the acknowledged skill of the modern

Balance of nature.

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Hindus in many difficult and delicate handicrafts, and the business tact and enterprise conceded to the merchants of Calcutta and Bombay.

Martial and democratic qualities.

The earliest Aryans were, as we have seen, an independent, energetic race. The later hero of the epic wars resembles those of the Scandinavian sagas and the Homeric poems, in his bold bearing towards the gods. He demands protection as a right: he does not hesitate to defy fate, and to unsheathe his weapons against the lightnings of angry deities. Still later the belief prevailed that not only Brahman devotees, but Kshattriya chiefs, could awaken the jealousy of these superhuman masters, and even force them from their seats. The Mahâbhârata declares that neither penitence nor wisdom can bestow such bliss as they attain who die on the field of battle. "Remember," says the mother of the Pândavas to her sons, "that you are Kshattriyas, — not born to till the ground, nor trade, nor beg for bread, but to use the sword, to slay or be slain; and that it is a thousand times better to be slain with honor than to live in disgrace. Prove to the world that Kunti is the mother of a noble race." The modern Sikh or Râjput, who worships his sword and his shield, is a true representative of the epic Pându and Kuru chiefs. The heroic deeds of Krishna and Râma were sung by rhapsodists at the courts of the petty Indian kings long before some Hindu Pisistratus gathered and arranged their effusions, to be stamped with the symbolical names of Vâlmiki and Vyâsa.[1] In fact the whole history of the martial element in India, ancient and modern, strikingly resembles the growth of the same element in Greece and Northern Europe.

[1] Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, I. pp. 482, 839.

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We have seen, further, that the ancient system of independent village communities, which has held its ground in India down to the present time, was a system replete with vigorous germs of self-government. We have observed that the constitution and usages of the caste system bear resemblance in certain respects to those of the ancient Germanic tribes, especially in the independence of each caste in matters which concern its own organization and internal affairs;[1] and we have traced the democratic forces which have disintegrated the system itself.

It is a long way from Indra, the lightning-God of the old Veda, to Brahma, the contemplative Spirit adored in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgitâ. But, at every step in the transition, the practical and energetic side of the Aryan character, of which Indra was the typical deity, maintained its ground, in some form of reaction on the tendency to inertness and dream.

We pass to the most important of all these reactions in belief and institution, to that most impressive movement in all Asiatic history, where the practical philanthropy of the West may find itself anticipated within the most abstract philosophy of the East, — the Buddhist Reformation.

Every positive religion begins in a natural aspiration, which is also a true inspiration. It is embodied in the *Prophet*, who is wont to be a poet, and lover of men. Gradually it gathers about it the machinery of organization. The common understanding among its believers becomes a principle of mutual supervision to protect its interests and assure its triumph. The common faith ceases to be one with all life and law, the free growth of the person, and is

The process of religions.

[1] See Buyers's *Recoll. of Northern India*, p. 457.

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set off as a special commandment from without and from above, to comply with certain conditions and accomplish certain objects. It is embodied in a Church with holy names, books, fixed creeds, formulas, symbols, all of which have become fetiches at last; also in the functionary of the same, the *Priest*. But fresh aspirations are aroused by the process itself, since the soul cannot be driven into permanent dotage; and these strike off from it, finding their way upward, pushing aside its forms, and even its name. A new meaning will first be sought in the old formulas, nearer, it is fondly dreamed, to their original meaning. But it is soon found that the new wine is not for the old vessels; that the age is not content to give its new children the quaint names their grandfathers were called by, out of the old Bibles; and so the dead labels are thrown aside, as having served their purposes in the world. So there come to be many religions in human history, though all go back to a common root and an inmost identity.

Somehow the veil of priesthood is rent; the divine right of special names, creeds, and persons, is exploded; and the people make fresh way for themselves, with new affirmation of what is human and universal. Theology is converted into gospel. This third stage is embodied in the *Spiritual Reformer*, whose inspiration is not less real because it is not exclusively his, but belongs also to his age. He is reformer of the old paths, prophet of the new. This is the historic law.

Such was the history of Judaism, and the passage thence into Christianity; of Catholicism, and the escape into Protestantism; of each Protestant Church and the churches that came out of it. Such is now the history

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of Christianity itself and the universal religion that supplants its distinctive claims; as yet taking no name, let us hope; and, as identical with all true human life, surely needing none. We are now to trace the analogous process in Brahmanism.

Brahmanism; the aspiration.

That contemplative religion began in a profound sense of the mystery of existence. It was absorbed in the incessant recurrence of growth and decay, the endless transitions of life and death, the solemn flow of all things into the unseen, till it was possessed by a sense of unreality and dream. But this weight forced up the opposite pole of thought; the very restlessness guaranteed rest; the doom of change pressed home the sense of the eternal. So sound is nature in man: he sees how all things pass away; he will live for what cannot pass away. This the aspiration of Brahmanism, — an inspiration of faith in the everlasting.

We found this even in early Vedic hymns which taught the mystic unity of the gods; in later thoughtful musings on the origin of the universe, and its return into the bosom of the life whence it came; in the devout poet's philosophy that saw and felt all things and all beings as for ever in God. It sent the saints of Brahma to their aspiring penance and ascetic triumphs under those shadowy banyans, whose innumerable descending boughs and ascending roots, interlaced in one living whole, were a mystic symbol of spiritual being as masked by the manifold ties of life and bonds of action; and it held them there in patient effort to lose definite desires and thoughts in perfect union with the one infinite and eternal life which these but veiled. Remote as its method was from what now becomes us, it was an inspiration of

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thought and sacrifice and prayer; and so it has left to the ages those sublime responses that make amends for all extravagance and superstition in its devotees. The seers to whom we owe the Upanishads were none the less true believers in their vision, for the Brahmanical absolutism that was growing up around them.

Organization.

We have seen that large freedom of discussion and speculation prevailed in the Hindu schools from very early times. And it is obvious from the nature of thought that this mystical worship of the One and Everlasting could hardly have embodied itself in a sharply organized Church. Yet caste involved the distinction of priestly and lay classes. The spiritual relations of men became vicarious. The dogma grew definite. The Hymns, preserved in official memory as verbally inspired, were laden with comment and ritual that swelled into new Veda as sacred as the first. The ascetic rule became more systematic and relentless: the original contempt of the saint for the changing world grew into contempt of all social relations. Caste, not organized by the priesthood, was elaborated by that class, in its own interest; and the uninitiated classes were rigidly excluded from reading or teaching the Veda. The Brahmanical caste was debarred by its limits as a hereditary body from any effort to enlarge its own membership. The fewer its numbers, the diviner would it seem; and the higher would be the prestige of unity. Like the priesthoods of all religions, it cherished its spiritual light as too precious to be trusted to the untaught mind; holding it in custody of a mediatorial authority, by whose service its virtue was to be made effective for the common salvation. The multitude was its footstool

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on earth, and its dominion reached on through the life to come. Brahmanism was not a system to recognize the necessity of proselyting. It was the effort of the individual to lift himself out of illusion into real life, and its only associative principle was that of caste. Far from having any idea of proselytism, it was aristocratic and unsocial; the climate suppressing practical energy in the thinker; and the contemplative spirit tending to personal isolation. It had its fraternities and schools, and numberless hermitages sprinkled the forests of India; but these schools were not founded to share the light of Brahmanical wisdom with other than the higher or "twice-born" classes, nor were hermitages planted in the spiritual interest of the aborigines, except in so far as, being admitted into the body politic as Śudras, these lower races were to be saved by the meritorious disciplines of its priestly devotees. Its steady tide of monasticism, setting southwards into the wilderness, measured the force with which it repelled the social sympathies. Christianity, it is well known, had a similar monastic phase in its history. There were elements of Brahmanism, however, which helped to counteract or weaken this tendency to isolation: some of these have already been mentioned in our section on the Laws. Buddhism, notwithstanding its democratic spirit, used the name of Brahman with respect, as representative of purity and the true path of life;[1] and defended it from discredit at the hands of those who claimed exclusive title to it. Many circumstances indicate that the system had hardly reached the stage of strict and effective organization, when it began to be checked by the definite protest of Buddhism; to which it

[1] *Dhammapada.* See also Sykes, in *Journal Roy. As. Soc.*, vi. p. 406.

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yielded so readily that a few centuries seem to have sufficed to give the latter religion the control of Northern India.

Reaction to universality.

The social sympathies cannot be abolished. Under whatever national or climatic conditions, practical democratic instincts will make themselves heard. No race nor religion has the monopoly of forces so essential to the justification of human nature. To some vigorous spirit the abstract truths of contemplation will become forces of his own active realism: they will become hands and feet, and demand to be used. Organized into his moral being, these meditations, these divine dreams, carry him straightway out of his spiritual cell, to say to the whole world: What is mine is yours also: the great all-reconciling light that shone down to me on the mountain-top, in the desert stillness, in the night of self-abandonment to the best, this was not for me, it was for all mankind. Then the spiritual aristocracy has to learn that the truths it was hoarding are greater than itself; that they refuse its patronage and custody, and go home to the universal heart. It has to deal as it best can, even in these finer and subtler spheres of thought, with democratic reform.

That a practical, humanitarian spirit has been the natural outgrowth of mystical and pantheistic devotion has been already noted in previous pages of this volume. In Brahmanical history, this justification, so early and rapid that it indicates the great strength of these elements in the Hindu mind, was Buddhism. And Comparative Religion hardly affords a more interesting study than the process by which its healthful reaction struggled forth out of the abyss of abstract ideas and ascetic disciplines.

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From what has now been said it will be readily inferred that to define Buddhism or assign a date for its origin is far from easy. It is an element, rather than a special movement; and perhaps we should not greatly err if we used the name to designate the ever-varying forms of a protestant, democratic, humane quality in the Oriental mind, as natural to it as the contemplative, and usually interwoven therewith. Scholars are agreed in tracing it, as a philosophy, back to Kapila and the Sânkhya, which may yet prove to have been the oldest of the great Hindu systems.[1] Buddhist tradition itself refers the birth of Gotama Buddha to Kapilavastu (the dwelling of Kapila), and throws the old rationalistic philosopher back into a very remote era. We have already seen that Kapila was, in all essential respects, at variance with Brahmanical exclusiveness, with idolatry of traditions and texts, if he did not absolutely refuse all authority to the Vedas; that he insisted on the validity of individual being against absorption into the universal; and that he had a democratic reliance on the adequacy of the human faculties to test and reveal truth. These are certainly germs of the liberty and humanity of Buddhism, if not of all its speculative tenets. The birth-time of the Sânkhya has never yet been found. We may reasonably trace it back to primitive qualities in the Aryan race; to the independence and self-reliance conspicuous both in the Rig Veda hymns, and in the self-governing communities that have so firmly held their own, as a necessity of Hindu life. This theory is confirmed by Buddhist tradition, which identifies Gotama, both as to descent and to the early scenes of his

Buddhism a constant element.

[1] Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, II. 60; Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 248.

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mission, with the heroic Kshattriya race of the Śâkyas, and with the localities of the epic wars.

The Vedânta, as well as the Sânkhya, shows germs of Buddhism. They appear in its devotion to abstract speculation, and in its recognition that the soul needed the Vedas but for a time, and could be satisfied only by a life in the eternal, where all distinctions of rank and caste would of course be lost for ever. And, more than this, the Buddhists are even charged by the Brahmans with plagiarizing the idea of universal brotherhood from *their* sacred books, and then turning it against them.[1]

Anti-ecclesiasticism.

The protest against ecclesiastical authority as embodied in the priesthood, reappears at every stage of Hindu history. The Vedic legend of Viśvâmitra, or *the people's friend*, and his contest with Vasishtha, or *the best*, a superlative which means orthodox sainthood, has a development co-extensive in time with the national religious literature. Many other vestiges point to a struggle of some kind in early times between the sacerdotal and secular classes. This schism, of which some account has already been given, was probably a continuous one, commencing as soon as the two classes became distinctly organized for political and religious ends; and of this the warfare waged by Buddhism against the whole caste system, in the interest of the humblest classes as well as of woman, was but the extension.

Certain "atheists and scorners of the Veda," whom Manu expels from the company of the righteous, as addicted to heretical books, are supposed to have been Buddhists by those who ascribe a comparatively late origin to the code.[2] With more probability they may be

[1] Müller, *Sanks. Lit.*, p. 85.

[2] Wheeler, I. 451; *Manu*, II. 11.

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said to prove that the rationalistic tendency was active some centuries at least before Buddha.

Buddhism has a twofold aspect, practical and speculative; and great injustice has been done by judging it from one or the other point of view exclusively. In its earliest definite form, it was mainly, a *moral* and *philanthropic* reaction. Yet it had also its spiritual aspiration and its metaphysical basis. The Chinese Buddhists say of the two schools which, upon the whole, have represented respectively the metaphysical and the moral sides of this religion, that "as the water is one though the vessels are different, and as the illumination is one though the lamps be many, so with the schools of the *Great and Little Vehicles*." That Buddhism is thus consistent with itself will clearly appear from the studies to which the reader is now invited.[1] We shall begin with its speculative principles, which cannot well be separated from its original impulse, since they grew naturally out of the existing soil of Hindu thought.

Buddhism twofold.

It carried the belief of Brahmanism concerning true and false being to its logical ultimates, reducing it to negation by putting it through dialectic processes which neither spiritual intuition, nor the mystic sense of the infinite and eternal, is suited to bear; yet it was not its purpose to destroy either of these. As it started from the same experience of in-

Speculative Buddhism.

[1] Of the *Pitakas*, or "baskets" of the Law, the *Abhidharma*, or metaphysical portion, must be later than the *Vinaya* (ethics) and the *Sutras* (discourses). Yet the terms and phrases in which it expresses the substance of Buddhist experience are also found in these, though in less developed forms. See passages in D'Alwis's *Buddhist Nirvâna*. Some of the older Sutras combine, with their simple counsels against opposite extremes of worldliness and self-discipline, the whole philosophy of pain and release, tracing the one to the five *Khandas* (mainly mental faculties) and the twelve *nidânas*, or special causes, and defining the other as the perfect wisdom and rest of nirvâna. See Leon Feer's careful *Études Bouddiques* in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1870.

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constancy and illusion, so it sought the same end, the real and eternal, as spiritual foothold and rest, by the same process of *thinking away* those transitory phantasmal elements. It employed logical dialectic as the test of their destructibility, as a fire that should leave nothing unconsumed, save what could not perish. Utterly to abolish illusion and death down to their subtlest disguise, it used similar mental weapons with those afterwards employed by mediæval schoolmen to establish Christian dogma; only that the method was *destructive* of conceptions, as in the latter case it was defensive and apologetic. A completer parallel is found in the well-known negative dialectics of the Eleatic and Megaric schools of Greece. Its three steps were affirmation, denial, and abolition of both. A thing may be proved to exist, yet it may also be proved to have no existence; finally, it neither exists nor does not exist: hence all phenomena should be looked at from a state of pure detachment.[1] The perpetual self-contradiction, which elusive, intangible cognitions like time, space, matter, form, and motion, can be put through, is familiar to logicians. Here it but made part of an earnest application of every method by which the fact of impermanence could be shown, to the whole substance of experience,[2] by the moral and religious sentiments, intent on overcoming the mystery of pain and death, and in the name of humanity itself.

The logical ordeal.

Whatever definite faith in the phenomenal world remained to Brahmanism after its own mystical renunciation, was swept away by this unsparing logical ordeal, which, for thoroughness,

[1] See Burnouf., *Introd. to Hist. of Buddhism*, p. 457–461.
[2] See passages in Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth.*, II. 536.

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might be called the Calvinism of Brahmanical doctrine. The postulate of all profound philosophy from Democritus to Fichte, — that the highest knowledge is conditioned by a conviction of ignorance, — it carried out more thoroughly than the system it sought to supplant. Brahmanism, having done its utmost to abolish all pretence of reaching knowledge through transient forms, or reality in phenomenal existence, had found compensation and rest in its intuition, its fervor, its poetic affirmativeness, its mystical awe, and its devout self-surrender to the One. Regardless of these elements, Buddhism applied its rationalistic tests to the definite conceptions they still protected, and confidently struck out for an ideal goal, even beyond that silent sea of Brahma.

How did it deal with the forms of belief which it found in the way of its purpose?

The burden and release.

We must recall the fact that Hindu consciousness was pervaded by a sense of the unity of all life. Under this inspiration, it had conceived the continuity of personal existence as transmigration through countless forms and changes of being. It was an immeasurable pilgrimage for the soul to contemplate, and saddened throughout by the same doom of pain and death which made the present life seem a burden and a dream. Gotama, besought by his father to give up his purpose of renouncing his throne and the world, with promises that he should receive whatever he desired, answers: "O king! grant me four things, and I will remain with you: to be free from old age, from sickness, from decay, from death; and if you cannot give me these, then accord me another not less needful, to be free from transmigration when I die." [1]

[1] St. Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. 17.

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And here is his joyful cry of release at the moment of becoming *The Buddha*, or Enlightened One: —

"Through many births have I run,
Seeking the maker of this tabernacle.
Painful is birth again and again;
But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen.
Thou canst not build for me another house:
Thy rafters are broken, thy ridgepole destroyed;
I have reached the extinction of desire."

The thought of endless duration, of immortal destinies, brooded over these contemplative minds, just as the idea of present material and social opportunity possesses the modern world. With what weary sense of bondage must the imagination, thus bound to the one ever-recurring idea, have dwelt on these innumerable returns to birth; these inevitable and endless "bonds of action," these consequences of conduct transmitted from world to world and form to form; of which death was again and again only a fresh resurrection, and every new phase of existence the thrall! It was this heavy burden of care and pain — this monotone of thought, pursuing an endless coming and going and coming again, a bondage to decay and death, through immeasurable time — from which both Brahmanism and Buddhism sought escape, and from which each found deliverance in its own way. But it is plain that the *unity* of all forms of existence, admitted by both, allowed of no escape, but to *transcend* them all. Existence itself, in a certain sense, must be overpassed. In other words, emancipation could come only through a purely *ideal* conception, illumination, absorption, the substance whereof must be, — to think away from, to work out of, to discipline, purify, exalt one's self from, *existence* in the

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sense given the word by the doctrine of transmigration; that is, existence in the sense of dream, of bondage to decay, death, and return; existence in all conceivable forms of transient life, as being *not* really life, not inalienable certainty, but obliged to point for these beyond itself. To the Vedantists this transcendent liberty from changing form, this ideal bliss over which transmigration had no sway, was *immortal life in Brahma*. To the Buddhist, who boldly refused to except Brahma, as a form of existence, from his logic of negation, it was *nirvâna*.

Transmigration was *pravritti*, a state of change: freedom was *nirvritti*, no more change. The Buddha represented intellectual essence, "perfect knowledge;" and the *nirvritti* at which he arrived was therefore *mind* independent of matter,[1] of embodied shape, of the perceptive faculties in their conceivable relations with the world, in which they are necessarily conditional and finite. This was not *essentially* different from the Sânkhya idea of the "independence of Purusha," though with an absoluteness of protest against the mutable, which Kapila would not have allowed. It means a witness-soul, which he also affirms; but, so absorbed in the fulness of its emancipation, that it refuses to be defined by positive conceptions of existence, all of which would remand it to dependence on what is transient. Hence the fascination of tracking these fugitive conceptions through all phases, in the confidence of a power beyond, to criticise and dissolve them. The most metaphysical form of Buddhism makes the wisdom of the saint nearest nirvâna to consist in "*not* seizing the form."[2]

[1] Hodgson, *Trans. R. A. S.*, II. 249.
[2] *Prajnâ Pâramitâ*. See Burnouf's *Introd.*, p. 470.

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From law to gospel.

That a law of bondage forces man into a gospel of freedom is the inspiring fact that continually appears in religious history. As in the Judaism of Paul, so here, it was an overwhelming legalism that enforced deliverance by its pressure. It was the "bonds of action," those inexorable sequences of penalty, that made the burden of transmigration intolerable. To believe that the wrong deed bears only evil fruit, and this for ever; that its results pass over through an unending succession of lives, — is absolute slavery and despair of finding release; *unless* there enters, to complete the conception of spiritual laws, the assurance that there is some divine chemistry, some redeeming leaven, to which that inexorable rule of like from like is subordinate. How man shall thus find escape from the moral burden of every imperfect action in his past, and in the sum total of human life, which has gone to make his present, — and which in this aspect may be called *his own* "*past lives*," — how he shall offset the strict application of such moralism to the endless detail of conduct, in works done wrongly or to be done rightly, in sins of omission and commission, — depends on his special ethnic constitution and the peculiarities of the stage of civilization at which he has arrived. But that he does find such emancipating force, and hold it as one of the very deepest and surest of forces, one of the substantial laws and facts of spiritual being, is a truth of universal religion. Of course a purely *speculative* ideal, such as a contemplative race must form, is of itself inadequate to this end; while the Christian dogma of salvation by the merits of another person is not only inadequate, but, to human reason at least, essentially irrational and vicious. But it must not be forgotten that nirvâna as

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a speculative ideal does not represent the whole of the Buddhist vision of emancipation, just as the dogma of atonement does not cover the whole Christian conception of "salvation," even in the great body of believers who make it the central point of their creed.

The peculiar form under which Buddhism, at least in its later forms, conceived the process of *transmigration*, was an effort at once to recognize its moral values, and to step forth from the bondage of its stern legalism. Those fateful fetters of endless sequence, penal issues from actions, "the wombs of pain;" those recurring births and deaths, which expressed the continuity of moral law and life; that solemn ring of each stroke of conduct upon the whole future, — it did not admit merely, but carried out to their fullest requirement. The Buddhist *karma* is the whole moral effect of one's (supposed) past lives, concentrated in his individual organization; a presiding genius or destiny, determining the form personality shall assume.[1] Sooner or later the tree of conduct thus transmitted from seed to seed bears its own full fruit. Though, as Gotama is made to say in one of the sutras, *during the process* a man who has done good may be brought into a place of punishment because of certain evil deeds, and one who has done evil may be found in one of the heavens by reason of certain good ones, yet sooner or later both the good and the evil ripen in his experience.[2] But, impossible as it might seem, an escape was effected from this stern legalism and this interminable bondage. For the earlier Buddhists there was a form of release in the assurance of nirvâna, of which I shall speak farther

The new soul.

[1] Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, 394, 445. *Karman* means action or work.
[2] Koeppen, *Religion d. Buddha*, I. 301.

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on. But the *later* form to which reference is here made was by a step which is to me incomprehensible, except as what we may call a declaration of independence; a bold counterstroke of the spirit in behalf of its invaded and captured liberty; a reprisal of spontaneity upon fate. It can hardly be other than a direct severing of the logical knot, an appeal from the processes of the understanding to that mystic realm of ideal power in which all spiritual release is guaranteed. That step was to declare that the individual thus invested by *karma*, thus positively constituted by the moral order, was *not the same as before, but a new soul;* its personality being a transmission indeed of the old unpaid account with the moral laws, yet in such wise as to be properly a new independent force, and *somehow* distinct from the former product of the good and bad habits in question, who is there only *as a new creation*.

Karma.

It is a strange and subtle thought, the meaning whereof must be thoughtfully considered. "Transmigration," it was well said, "here becomes transformation, and metempsychosis metamorphosis."[1] But it cannot mean literally the release of one individual from the consequences of conduct by creation of another out of his cast-off bonds and dues; nor, on the other hand, can it mean that all personal existence perishes at death, which would contradict the whole spirit of Buddhism and its theory of the attainment of nirvâna. It cannot mean to abolish moral responsibility in the act of attaining spiritual release, to contradict the very idea of moral order in

[1] Koeppen, *Religion des Buddha*, I. 302. A valuable and comprehensive work, unsurpassed, if not unequalled, in the literature of the present subject. See also Bigandet's *Legend of the Burmese Buddha* (1866), pp. 21, 468.

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stating its process. The fact of responsibility is not lost sight of through this apparent change of personal identity; and, if the former self-consciousness is in a sense denied passage to the new form of being, the *moral* identity at least is carried forward thither, and enters its claims to represent the substance of personality itself. Indeed the Buddhist saints are constantly spoken of as maintaining personal identity through all stages of their progress through successive births.[1] It must be remembered, in order to arrive at the meaning of *karma*, that, as the whole sense of individuality hovers vaguely in the Hindu mind, the same character must be found in its sense of transition from one form of life or world of forms to another. Terms expressive of this are in fact used with great mystical freedom and breadth of meaning. The "new soul" involved in this Buddhist *karma* can mean nothing else than *a new starting-point*, a reaction of some sort on the inevitable and indispensable bonds of former conduct; some hint, perhaps a real instinct, that there is more in man's spiritual experience than the consciousness of past merit or demerit *as his own;* an effort, in short, to affirm that spontaneity in his spiritual essence which he must not press the fact of responsibility so far as to ignore; the liberty that resides in every moment to cast off the burden of the past, and begin reconstruction of experience itself.

Moral relations of Karma.

With this assertion of freedom, if I am right in interpreting it as such, the Buddhist idea of *karma* sought to combine full acceptance of the facts of moral order. It is the inextinguishable vitality of the moral seed, passing beyond the harvests of a single lifetime, that is here insisted on,

[1] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 398.

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as not negatived by the fact that *we have no consciousness of a previous state of being*. We are "new souls," yet not the less are past lives now living on in ours, and we in a sense take up their accounts with moral and natural laws, where these left them. *Karma* means that the continuity of the race, the endless succession of its births, is really a form of the perpetual productivity of moral causes. We have here then an instinctive Oriental presentiment or analogue of the modern science of heredity; except that the parentage it deals with is primarily *moral*, not physical, and that it pushes the truth that we are ignorant as to the past grounds of our present organization to the point of apparently making us the *mere consequence* of a series of acts unknown, and by us unknowable. It even presumes a creative power in them adequate to produce our consciousness itself. But this is the imaginative form in which a deep conviction of the omnipotence of moral laws was expressed; and we have already noted how decisively the rights of spontaneity came in to counteract a too absolute determinism.

"The practical tendency of the Krishna faith has its counterpart in the Yâtnika school of Buddhism, which teaches that all obstacles can be mastered. While the Swâbhavika school yields itself with resignation, in the faith that the Supreme Essence [Fate] governs all, the Yâtnika admonishes to energetic action, since, though man cannot withdraw himself from *karma*, he can nevertheless influence its course. The ripened fruit of conduct must be eaten; but it depends on the will to sow such seeds, that a pleasant fruit shall grow up, or such, as falling from the tree of life, shall give assurance of immortality." [1]

The reader will recall a very similar tone in the proverbial philosophy of the Fable-books, which are

[1] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 618.

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largely due to Buddhist influences, and show how elastic to the demands of freedom are even this strong sense of the transient and unreal, and this stringent assertion of moral destinies.

Freedom in determinism.

It is not meant that this intuition of moral order, this veneration for moral cause and consequence, left full scope for human freedom. Destiny was more or less master of the Oriental mind. But while we recognize this, we must not forget to inquire what elements of freedom lie in the very conception of destiny, what power this master has to *arouse* and *initiate* mastership in its subject. There is recognition of divine necessity in every great step of protest, in all philosophy of reform. Hero and saint are free only through the inevitable, the predetermined, the irresistible; through the all-absorbing and supplanting Right. Fate is the principle of progress in all religion; and in India as in Greece, in Buddha as in Prometheus, this, as supreme Moral Order, calls the old forms of deity to judgment, and leads forward to new fields of faith. It is in and through a sense of destiny, a genius neither to be ignored nor disobeyed, that the soul ever and again substantiates its freedom afresh; enforces the right of its new vision to unmake the creeds and masters that old wants had made for it; affirms its lien on the resources of the universe, its right of eminent domain in its own household of worship and work. And so the time came when all the divinities of Brahmanism, even up to the "eternal Brahma" himself, had to meet the unsparing logic of an idea, the very substance of which was necessary law.

Omnipotence of moral order in Karma.

Buddhism put the whole faith of the time through this crucible of *karma*, or moral order and destiny. This explains its later cosmogony and mythology. The revolutions of matter,

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the destructions and renovations of the universe, with which it marked the track of endless ages, were but the play of this transcendent force, the product of moral determinations. Out of these imperishable germs of essential right, these loyalties of time and force to eternal law, comes the wind that breathes in the spaces of desolation from all sides, to renew the worlds; out of these the primitive energies which at enormous *kalpa* intervals destroy the "worlds of form" up to the very borders of "the formless," nearest nirvâna the supreme abode; and through the *kalpa* of "emptiness" which intervenes between this destruction and the new birth of things, these *moral destinies* endure, the only germs of reconstruction.[1] They are like the Scandinavian "golden dice of destiny," found again, and unharmed, after the "Twilight of the gods," in the growing grass of a new-risen earth.

Its idealism.

This is stupendous fatalism; but how it clings to those eternal distinctions by which the conscience lives! It is at least pure idealism: it makes sense the outcome of spiritual fact and experience; and the energy of its protest, criticism, and reconstructive power will show us that it was not such a fatalism as must of itself abolish freedom.

Negation for positive ends.

The older Sutras speak of the gods as rejoicing at Buddha's revelation. Their heavens trembled, when the great light shone through them; yet Brahmâ told them the glad tidings of release, which were for them also, and a cry arose, "The might of the gods increases, the might of the *asuras* (evil powers) fails."[2] The legend shows at least the geniality with which Buddhism did its work.

[1] Koeppen, I. 268–284.

[2] *Dharmaśâstra Sutras*, in *Journal Asiatique* for 1870, p. 377.

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But its work was a radical one. Its pungent logic invented even more destructive terms for the illusoriness of phenomenal life than Brahmanism. Its founder himself, as a visible person, was made to issue from the womb of the beautiful Mâyadevi, the "Perfection of Illusion." It exalted the dignity of Buddhahood as the attainment of truth, far beyond the recognized sainthood or what it adored. As Brahmâ had supplanted the Vedic gods, so the stern logic of time and death now supplanted Brahmâ. Accepting without difficulty the whole series of divinities, popular and speculative, as phenomena, Buddhism swept them all into that common category of subjection to change and death, from which Brahmanism had excepted the world of Brahmâ alone. All names and forms with which definite conceptions had become associated were alike summoned to receive their sentence, and yield to a greater than themselves.

For within this unsparing logic of negation there was a positive faith: a sense of eternal being made it bold to affirm wherein all these names and forms failed to satisfy the highest demand. The Buddha, the "illumined, awakened" man, alone could know, in *nirvâna* beyond them all, the purpose and goal of life.

The Brahmans, it is true, soon came to regard the new movement as atheism. And this was natural; since it does not appear that Gotama and his earliest followers spent their thought on defining or even conceiving a *new* form of deity. It was precisely the absence of such definite form that their religious sentiment itself demanded; and they preached their ideal good simply as independence of the limits they criticised. It was counted atheism in Kapila when he denied an Iśwara,

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an external Lord and interfering Providence. And here were others who dethroned all existing forms under which deity was conceived; who denied that even Brahmâ could offer an asylum in his own nature from the sorrowful doom of change and death that swept through all existence. To every recognized form of being; to every conception which had become fixed by usage or by instituted worship within definite lines of meaning, they applied one test, and the answer was always the same. They could admit no definite idea of deity, therefore, and no Name. But what was it, again let me ask, that could have *applied* this test of transiency, but an ever-present sense of the eternal? Of not less moment is the question: Does belief in deity reside essentially in definite ideas or names?[1]

No absolute atheism.

It does not yet appear that there is any just ground either in historic fact or rational thought for attributing absolute atheism to any people. Behind the most positive assertions of it, even in speculative philosophy, there seems to be very clear indication, or else implication, of the necessity, in every sane mind, to recognize a moral order, and an eternal principle of Rightness in some form sovereign in the universe, and competent to at least every result

[1] D'Alwis (*Buddhist Nirvâna*, p. 13) thinks that the doctrine of Buddhism from the outset was "*point-blank Atheism.*" Yet he admits that the belief in a First Cause is ineradicably "implanted in the soul;" that the savage and the Buddhist thinker are alike conscious of it; and that Buddha himself "did not ignore it." This First Cause, however, is (p. 60) "nothing." (!) In other words, the representative of an ineradicable necessity for believing in something is — nothing at all; and that for a quarter of the human race. I, of course, would neither misrepresent the views of this evidently accomplished scholar, nor ascribe to them a manifest absurdity. The incongruity of the statements above quoted arises, I presume, from limiting the idea of God, which *is* ineradicable, to that of a definite creator (Iśwara) or Beginner, at a *first* moment of time; an idea which is as certainly quite outside the Buddhist line of vision, and is by *no* means ineradicable.

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which we are wont in ordinary speech to ascribe to intelligence, and to intelligence alone.

Buddhist "atheism."

Koeppen, himself an important authority on the history of Buddhism, gives a long list of co-authorities who affirm that it has "absolutely no trace of the idea of a God."[1] And this is the prevailing opinion of the Christian world. But writers who speak of *a* God will always be found to have given a meaning to the idea of God which involves more or less distinctly the Hebrew and Christian theory of an original creation, proceeding at a given time from a divine pre-existent Will. Buddhism, on the other hand, recognizes no such beginning, either to the chain of transient causes and effects, or to the revolutions of the worlds; and is therefore, by the theory in question, pure atheism.[2] But we must reflect that Mind considered in the former sense — as historically pre-existent to manifestation, and choosing it at a definite moment in its continuous life — is in reality thereby represented as *subject to the conditions of time*. It is not eternal in a true sense, since eternity knows no Before nor After. And such creative act at a definite moment, as the aforesaid critics insist on, would be, as Buddhism replies, but one of a series of acts *in time*, itself requiring a previous act, and so cannot reveal an original nor an eternal cause. And Buddhism may go further still. It may maintain that its own conception of a limitless *process of becoming*,[3] a manifestation of cause and effect without beginning or end, — although excluding creation in the Semitic

[1] Koeppen, I. 228. See also Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters*, I. p. 229.

[2] Its attribution of birth and form, as such, to *avidya*, or ignorance, does not seem to be the admission of a first cause; since this reasoning has relation only to the generation of *conceptions* in the human mind. On the other hand, see *D'Alwis*, p. 15.

[3] Koeppen, I. 230.

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or the Christian sense, as well as an *Iśwara*, or individual Lord, — does not in any sense exclude *eternal Being*, which must, on the contrary, be assumed as ground for the endlessness of the Becoming. So much for the metaphysics of the question.

But, however other religions and civilizations may interpret their speculation, the Buddhists as a whole do somehow find their way to the satisfaction of an instinct which we may properly call universal; of which, at all events, we cannot, without the strongest evidence, conceive whole races and generations to be destitute. Koeppen has himself quoted passages in which the Buddha is addressed as "God of Gods, Brahma of Brahmas, Indra of Indras, Father of the world, Almighty and All-knowing, Ruler and Redeemer of all." [1]

The same writer asserts that the earliest Buddhists offered no prayer, because Buddha had entered nirvâna and could not hear; and that their so-called prayers were really only formulas of confession, hymns of praise, pious ejaculations, blessings, and uttered longings.[2] But devout aspirations are the proper substance of prayer, and are none the less recognition of a source of strength higher than human, for not consciously defining this in objective personal form, nor even taking the shape of direct invocation or address. There is more religion in one divine desire than in many beseechings. Later, as Koeppen himself concedes, the "Thou" was added; and the northern Buddhists, especially, have abundant forms of prayer, in which either Gotama Buddha, or the divine Triad of later ecclesiastical origin, or the earlier Buddhas

[1] Koeppen, I. 430. So Hardy, *Manual*, pp. 360, 384, 386.
[2] Koeppen, I. 554, 555; Wuttke, II. 544. Also *Schlagintweit, Buddhism in Thibet.*

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of this *kalpa* (age of the world), are addressed as conscious hearers of their worshippers; and it is added that a very slight alteration would render these effusions suitable for Christian worship.[1] In illustration, a Mongolian prayer is quoted,[2] of which I give a portion: —

"O Thou in whom all creatures trust, Buddha, perfected amidst countless revolutions of worlds, compassionate towards all, and their eternal salvation, bend down into this our sphere, with all thy society of perfected ones. Thou law of all creatures, brighter than the sun, in faith we humble ourselves before thee. Thou who completest all pilgrimage, who dwellest in the world of rest, before whom all is but transient, descend by thy almighty power, and bless us."

Every attribute of deity, the creative only excepted, is freely ascribed to the Buddha by his worshippers: omnipotence, omnipresence, perfect love and bliss.[3] The modern schools of the south generally believe in "absorption into the supreme and infinite Buddha."[4] Ritter does not hesitate to affirm the essential feature of Buddhism to be, that a man, freeing himself from obstacles of nature by holiness, may save his fellow-man from the corruption of the times and become supreme God."[5] Here, just as in Christianity, the religious sentiment, while concentrating itself on a human deity, nevertheless really invested his humanity with an infinite meaning. So far indeed as the concentration is exclusive in either case, exacting worship as the due of this *one* man, in absolute distinction from all other actual or possible men, it indicates imperfect recognition of that divineness of the human on which

[1] Koeppen, I. 554, 555; Wuttke, II. 544. [2] *Pallas*, II. 386.
[3] Franck, *Études Orientales*, p. 46.
[4] Bigandet, *Legend of the Burmese Buddha*, p. 320.
[5] *Hist. Anc. Philos.*, I. 94–96.

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it substantially rests; and this defect only freedom and intelligence can correct. But in none of these crude forms of belief can the idealization which puts a historical person in the place of the Infinite be properly called atheism. To the Buddha of the East as to the Christ of the West were really ascribed those powers which made up the popular conception of *Deity*.

It is to be observed, further, that Buddhahood itself is held to be perpetual reproduction of an eternal fact. An endless succession of Buddhas must associate the idea itself with infinity, and lift Buddha-worship above the evanescence that will attach to all these personal forms in their *individual* capacity. The particular Buddha must be to an extent lost, for the worshipper, in the exhaustless productivity of that Intelligence of which he is but one expression.

This deeper logic of faith cannot, it is true, wholly overcome the tendency to concentrate worship on some one personage; a tendency which is found in all positive religions, and is associated with natural gratitude and love. Yet Buddhism has been fertile in the production of *new* centres of worship, adapted to different ages and races. Its later mythology in the north is not wanting in names of *ideal* saints, *Dhyani Bodhisattvas*, who have been venerated like Gotama. The most important of these are *Amitabha*, or Everlasting Light; *Mandshuśri*, the mild Holy One; and *Avalokiteśwara*, the "Lord who looks down on men:" to whom it is believed the Thibetans address their sacred formula, *Om mani padmê hôm*, — "*O the Jewel in the Lotus.*" [1]

Avalokiteśwara is the manifested deity in Thibetan

[1] Koeppen, II. 20–28. 60.

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Buddhism; who vows "to manifest himself to every creature in the universe; to deliver all men from the consequences of sin, and never to arrive at Buddhahood till all are born into the divine rest, receiving answer to their prayers." "He himself hears and answers every prayer, and they who trust in him are secure."[1]

Buddhist trinities.

It is interesting to notice how similar are the forms which an immature theism has assumed in the efforts of very dissimilar races to fix the religious ideal in one personality, and develop its faith and cultus around this centre. Thus a divine triad has been adored by the Buddhists both of the North and of the South, from comparatively early times. Just as the first Christians combined their devotion to Christ with veneration for his gospel and his apostles, so Buddha was united with *Dharma*, the Law, and *Samgha*, the teachers, or the Assembly.[2] Out of these elements was developed a metaphysical trinity: Intelligence; Law, as its manifestation; and the unity of the two in Holiness.[3] Cosmological triads also are found in northern Buddhism; such as mind, matter, and their unity.[4] In Nepâl and Thibet the forms of trinity become distinctly personal; and some of them startle the European traveller by their resemblance to the ontological speculations of the later German schools,[5] as well as to forms of the Christian Trinitarian dogma.[6] Koeppen calls these theories "Buddhistic but in name," as derived from Sivaistic or other influences; but they

[1] Beal's *Catena of Buddhist Scripture*, pp. 376, 406.

[2] Lassen, II. 1084, Koeppen, I. 373; Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 209; Bigandet, p. 1. Most Buddhist works begin with invocation to these three.

[3] Abel Rémusat, *Sur la Relig. Samanéenne.*

[4] Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 36.

[5] Koeppen, I. 550–553.

[6] *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, pp. 103, 104.

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are certainly made up of Buddhist elements; and, if not found in the earlier phases of this religion, they are none the less natural growths within it, accompanying its metaphysical canon, and tend to refute the charge that it involves, of necessity, even *speculative* atheism.

Âdibuddha.

Indo-Scythian coins and the temples of Nepâl afford proof that the belief in a supreme, all-seeing Buddha, represented by two Eyes as symbols of intelligence, was current in those regions at least as early as the beginning of the Christian era.[1] The Nepâlese say that "*Swayambhu*, the self-existent, called Âdibuddha, was when nothing else was. He wished to become *many*, and produced the Buddhas through union with his desire. Âdibuddha was never seen. He is pure light."[2] In the topes dedicated to this deity, no deposits of relics have been found; but the symbolic Eyes were placed on the sides or the crown of the edifice.[3] Lassen even believes that the recognition of supreme Mind can be traced back by these vestiges alone to the earliest Buddhists.[4] The school which worships Âdibuddha is perhaps confined to regions where external influences have been active.[5] Bastian, however, in his recent work on Central Asia, an immense collection of personal observations, tells us that the Buddhists generally, in that part of the world, worship *Abida*, as the highest God, to whom all perfections are ascribed. "Abida's thought is almighty. All spirits of thought are subject to his sway. He, the father of the gods, knows all, past, present, and to come."[6]

[1] Laeeen, II. 1084.
[2] Hodgson in *Transact. R. A. Soc.*, II. 232, 238.
[3] *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 8.
[4] *Ut supra.*
[5] Koeppen, II. 28, 29, 366; Wilson's *Relig. of Hindus*, II. 361.
[6] Bastian, p. 567. See also, for theistic sects, Salisbury's Essay in *Hist. of Buddhism, in Amer. Or. Journ.* for 1849.

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That later Buddhist metaphysics sometimes, as in the *Prajnâ Pâramitâ*, press the sense of transcience and illusion to the point of declaring that "even the highest names are but words, not signs of realities," is true.[1] One school affirms Buddha's personal appearance to have been illusion, as the Docetists did that of Jesus. So their dialectic, as we have seen, deals in the antinomies of the understanding, and shows plainly enough that logical processes cannot establish certitude. Nihilism.

These metaphysical portions of the canon are as thoroughly nihilistic as words can make them. But the words give a large margin for interpretation, and we must read between their lines. Buddha says in the Prajnâ Pâramitâ: "I must conduct to Nirvâna the innumerable creatures; yet there exist neither creatures to be conducted thither, nor creatures to conduct them." "*Not less*," he adds, "*are all these creatures to be conducted there*. How is this? Because an illusion constitutes them as they are."[2] In other words, the illusory present existence, and the reality of *nirvâna*, are alike to be recognized and acted on, as *facts*. The same work says of the saint, who has risen above "seizing the form," that he "has not attained nirvâna because he has not reached the eighteen distinct conditions of a Buddha."[3] Eighteen distinct conditions, after having laid aside the whole conception of definite forms! Is it not plain that this negative phraseology has but little of that strictness of meaning it would have with us?

But there is another element in the question. Metaphysical or logical processes, however skeptical

[1] See extracts collected by Wuttke, II. 536, and Wilson, II. 364.
[2] Burnouf, p. 478. [3] Ibid., p. 470.

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or even nihilistic, do not necessarily imply positive atheism; since the protest of the *moral* nature against that conclusion may be such as to transcend all *speculative* objections to the idea of God, and is not to be set aside in any case by arguments drawn from the understanding alone. Such negative processes in fact do not imply even *speculative* atheism, but may become the very ground on which deity is affirmed to be the only essential reality.[1]

The Alexandrian philosophers, for instance, tracked the phenomenal through every possible form of its conception with their probe of metaphysical negation; yet only to reach beyond them all, beyond reasoning, or the thinking faculty, beyond reason itself as an active force (ἐπεκεινα τοῦ νὸν), one indivisible, eternal Substance, whereof nothing real or perfect could be denied.[2] And for the attainment of real being they affirmed the necessary condition to be a divine exaltation (ἐκστᾶσις) of the mind through this abdication of the selfhood, this negation of all finiteness. The Buddhist *dhyanas*, or stages of contemplation, and the so-called "formless worlds" which are the nearest stages to *nirvâna*, answer in many respects to this ecstasy of Platonic mystics. The parallelism is remarkable, and points to the conclusion that nihilistic speculations should never be conceived as having satisfied the whole spiritual demand of those who have pursued them, never be made the gauge for testing the possibilities of a religion to which they may be referred.

"Take away nihilism," it has been said, "and you

[1] There is, however, no evidence that the statements of the *Prajnâ Pâramitâ* are those of Buddha himself. Burnouf, *Introd. to Buddh.*, p. 483.

[2] See especially Plotinus, *Enneads*, V. iii, vi.

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take away the only remedy, to the Buddhist, for the danger of existence."[1] This depends, of course, on the meaning we give to terms. It is at least equally true that if you *allow* nihilism, you take away all motive in the Buddhist for seeking freedom from existence. "Life," says the same writer, "arises [in Buddhist belief] from absence of knowledge. Call it ignorance, or what you will, it is nothing."[2] But, here again, we may say: the "life" that arises from *absence* of knowledge must be of that nature which its *presence* would abolish; and therefore cannot be life in an absolute sense, since the presence of knowledge *without* life is a self-contradiction.

It is certain, whatever may be true of metaphysical statements, that neither nihilism nor atheism characterizes the mass of Buddhist literature, the rites of the Buddhist Church, or, as a whole, the sects into which it has become divided.[3] It would indeed be fatal to our hopes for human nature, if we could be forced to believe that four hundred millions of at least partially civilized people have made a religion out of the love of nonentity, or indeed out of mere negation in any form. The apparent atheism of the Buddhist is, in substance, opposition to the idea of an external God, limited and individual, acting in imperfect human ways. This view is illustrated by a work, recently translated from the Siamese, written in defence of Buddhism against Christianity, by the minister of the late king of Siam, and called "The Modern Budd-

[1] D'Alwis, p. 21. [2] Ibid.

[3] Burnouf (*Introd.*, p. 441) thinks the *Svâbhâvika* School of Nepâl deny a spiritual principle. Babu Râjendralâl Mitra says (*Journ. Bengal As. Soc.*, xxvii.): "The Buddhists are theists, and believers in immortality." He even seeks to point out affinities between Buddhist and Odinic trinities.

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hist."[1] "If God," he argues, "makes the rain, he should make it fall equally all over the earth." "If fever is a visitation of God, there would be no running away from it." It is evidently the capricious God of the Christian missionaries who is here disproved upon their own ground. Again, his apparently antitheistic statement — that "the divine Spirit is but the actual spirit or disposition of man, good or evil" — refers to the *karma*, or moral law, as sovereign in every human soul, the expression of a divine unchangeable Order, dealing with the characters of each. This statement in reality emphasizes the inward unity of God with man. And in inviting "comparison between the idea of a divinity going about in all directions, and Buddha's idea that the divine all-knowing Bestower of rewards and punishments is merit and demerit (karma) itself," the writer is but exalting the eternal sway of justice, as against the arbitrary God of Christian dogma.

Müller's view.

Müller agrees with Burnouf and St. Hilaire, men nowise comparable with him in spiritual insight and recognition, in pronouncing Gotama an atheist. Yet he admits that tradition is an unsafe guide, and that the "atheism," whatever it might mean, did not consist in any distinct denial of the existence either of gods or of God.[2] In his Introduction to the Dhammapada, however (p. xxxi.), this eminent authority quotes from Spence Hardy's "Legends of Buddhism," and Gogerly's translations of the Sutras, in proof that such absolute denial can hardly be doubted. Yet these passages are apparently but affirmations of superiority to all the old deities, and refutations of the claims of Brahmâ in special, placed

[1] Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law.* [2] *Chips*, I. 287.

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in the mouth of Buddha by his disciples. At most their negation seems but to cover the idea of a purely external creator, a distinct and separate cause; and they are not inconsistent with a pantheistic recognition of infinite Intelligence immanent in the worlds and forms of being. It is singular that the excellence of Gotama's moral doctrine and the purity and nobility of his life, which forbade Müller to believe that he could have "thrown away so powerful a weapon in the hands of a religious teacher" as the belief in immortality, should not have seemed to him a sufficient answer to the charge of atheism also.[1] And the positiveness of Müller's statement on this point is the more surprising, from the fact that he finds no authority for believing that Buddha really instituted the metaphysical doctrines ascribed to him, or had other than a very simple popular philosophy of life.[2]

What refutes the charge?

Just here is indeed the real answer to the indictment brought by Christian theism against the faith of more than a third of the human race. For all its penetrating sense of a doom of sorrow and death attached to every conceivable form of life, for all its weariness of the endless recurrence of transmigrations and the "bonds of action," Buddhism did not consign men over to the sensualist's "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." It drew a different conclusion from its premise of pain. It said in substance: "So be it then. Yet shalt thou not despair, but freely accept destiny, and abandon desire for things that cannot satisfy because they cannot endure. Release thyself from such desire: release others, release all men; and believe that thou canst do this,

[1] See articles on *Buddhism* and *Nirvâna*, in *Chips*, &c., I. 234, 287.
[2] Ibid., p. 225. So also Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 253, 267.

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and that it is well worth thy while and theirs that it be done. And do this by self-sacrifice, mercy, justice, trust in each other; by every form of moral discipline, every possibility of love. Let the very burdens of the common lot lift you to such high faith and purpose, such energy of mutual help."

"What is the *fruit of the Bodhisattva's thought?* — Answer: Higher morality, higher perception of truth, great love, great pity." "A spirit exempt from anger; a spirit of compassion for the wandering; a spirit which forbids falling away from wisdom; a spirit of perseverance to the end."

"What is his *rule of duty?* — To attach himself with high desire to all laws of virtue; not to despise the ignorant; to be a friend to all men; to expect no more from transmigration."

"What his *bliss?* — The joy of having seen a Buddha; of having heard the law; of not repenting in giving; of having procured the good of all creatures."

"What his *health?* — The sound body; the mind not drawn to perishing things; bringing all beings into right and equal condition; freedom from doubt, on every law."

"To what should he adhere? — To meditation, to beneficence; to compassionate love; to the disciplines of wisdom.

"Since consciousness, body, life, self, are illusion, *therefore* is there perfection in morality, in ecstasy, in wisdom, in release." [1]

The substance of religion.

Truth, justice, love, — these at least were real. Through abysses of "nihilism" itself, if so it be called, certainly out of the dreary bondage of transmigration, man reached upward to grasp these, undoubting; nay, more, with ardor and zeal.

"The worlds may be blown away in a storm; the sun and moon may fall; the rivers may turn back to their sources; the sky may be rent, the earth destroyed; Mahâ Meru be broken to pieces; but the Buddhas cannot utter an untruth." [2]

[1] *Doctrine of the Four Perfections*, from *Sutras of the Great Vehicle*. See Feer, in *Journal Asiatique* for 1867, pp. 279-316. Yet writers of ability and a liberal spirit speak of this faith as having its root in selfishness, and meaning only self-absorption!

[2] *Legends of Buddha*, in Hardy's *Manual*, p. 332!

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The eternal light of morality shone clear, rendering an idea of destiny nobly productive, in which other religions read grounds for despair only. If such faith is atheistic, then must we allow to one form of atheism, at least, the meaning of worship. In the theoretic denial, what practical affirmation of deity!

It is indeed the truth of all time, and deep as human experience, that he who holds fast to moral realities is at one with the eternally real itself. One may disclaim all knowledge of God, yet his adherence to these shall preserve the loyalty which is absolute trust and faith, and possess the substance of freedom and truth. Is it not plain that deity may be verbally and intellectually disavowed, simply because too intimate and familiar to be outwardly observed; because, in fact, no other than the seer's very eye itself, by which he sees?

Value of Buddhist ethics.

The more absolute the theoretic negation of deity, then, the more positive would become the religious value of a moral idealism, associated with it, in some respects unsurpassed in human history. What if Buddhism be found to have swept all conceivable objects of faith into an "abysmal negation"? Yet so earnest, so believing, so devout was it in the pursuit of this, that the very negation flushed into life; became a positive ground of faith, an *entity* real and divine. This is perfectly conceivable. And it is also certain as a matter of history. Practically, the negation which the devout Buddhist pronounced against existence was somehow resolved, for him, into a best, a highest goal; in a word, *into deity*. For what else is that which men long for, cherish, love, adore? What else shall we call that which stirs them to generous conduct, to ideal aspiration, and bears fruit in pure morality?

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We come then to the word by which Buddhism expressed the end of human striving, the issue of all good. This "*nirvâna*," confidently supposed to have been nothingness, — how can it have been so to those who conceived it definitely as the eternal fact of the universe; and who affirmed positively all their lives, "*nirvâna is*," striving with all their might to reach it, and to help other men to do the same, by all the love and sacrifice they could devote? I am persuaded that this all-reconciling home — whose depths, filled with the saints of innumerable ages, invited all hearts to the fulfilment of their best desire — better deserves the name of deity than of nonentity; of Life than of "the Void." Grant the passivity of the Oriental ideal; yet ideal it is, or it could never have roused Oriental passivity to such a movement as Buddhism. Ample testimony to the truth that man loves to affirm more than to deny; that in some form he has ever kept his intuition of God.[1]

[1] Hints of this have not wholly failed to strike such writers as Hardwick, who, though seeking for contrasts with what he regards as revelations peculiar to Christianity, admits that northern Buddhism "has retained the lingering idea of some great Being, superior to the highest created entities and the source of ultimate felicity. The very Buddha who persisted in ignoring the Creator was sometimes raised to this dignity, while Nirvâna itself was changed by popular imagination into a paradise." And Müller, a more impartial scholar, who believes that "the feeling of dependence, which is the life-spring of religion, was completely numbed in the early Buddhist metaphysicians," grants that it "returned with increased warmth." Hardwick, II. 95. Müller's *Chips*, I. 284.

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II.

NIRVÂNA.

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NIRVÂNA.

WE may illustrate by this term the practical impossibility of pure negation. Etymology at least fails to bear out the confident assurances of Burnouf, Koeppen, Weber, and others, that its "extinction of the lamp of existence" means absolute annihilation. Nirvâna is from *nir*, separation from, and *vâ*, wind.[1] The simplest and most natural meaning seems to be, not "blown out," but "no more waving," as from presence of wind, no more restlessness and change. It is familiar to Brahmanical literature as synonymous with words signifying release, emancipation, the highest good.[2] It is similarly defined by the intense longings of devotees, who seek nirvâna as "the further shore;" "the port beyond the ocean of pain;" "the medicine that cures all disease;" "the water that quenches all thirst;" "complete fruition and salvation;" "the city reached by the path of universal knowledge, blessedness, peace."[3] Every word that can mean beatitude as a positive state comes to hand

Nirvâna a positive state.

[1] See the *Sanskrit Dictionaries* of Burnouf and Monier Williams.

[2] Müller, *Chips*, I. 282. He gives the word the meaning *blown out*, following Hindu lexicographers. Yet he does not find it used in the sense of annihilation in the older parts of the Buddhist scriptures. *Introd. to Dhammapada.* Colebrooke defines it as "profound calm." *Essays*, I. 402.

[3] Koeppen, I. 304; Burnouf, 442.

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in description of this apparent negation. Figurative as they are, these expressions imply that what they describe was an object of supreme desire. It has inspired the imagination; it has allured the affections; it has aroused the moral sense; it has stimulated to incessant watch over the passions. It has translated itself into psalms; it has flowed into mythology; it has planted, and builded, and civilized, in missions that are miracles of zeal and toil. Philosophical treatises distinctly aver that, "to him who attains it, *nirvâna* exists."[1] Indubitably so, we should say, or why should he *seek* to attain it? Why are millions travelling its "paths," that shine with the hope of salvation?

Testimony of the Dhammapada.

But we can go back to more positive testimony. The *Dhammapada*, or "Path of Virtue," is perhaps the oldest record of Buddhist faith.[2] As such it is believed to have come to the hands of Buddhaghosha, a Brahman convert of great learning, in the fifth century, in Ceylon. In his translation of the oldest commentaries on the law, out of Singhalese into Pâli, its sentences are referred directly to Gotama Buddha himself; and the circumstances under which they were uttered given in detail. They formed part of an ancient collection, transmitted, it was believed, by the son of the great Buddhist king, Aśoka, after being established as genuine by the famous council held (B.C. 246) at Pâtaliputra. They are referred to in the monumental inscriptions left by that monarch, the most trustworthy data in Hindu history. The style is plain and direct, the morality free from tech-

[1] *Milinda Prasna*, quoted by Müller, *Chips*, I. 289.

[2] D'Alwis (p. 29) regards it as a collection of sentences from the Pitakas, which are compilations, in the main (page 17–18), of Gotama's discourses, by his disciples.

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nical or mythological accretions; and the whole work bears marks of having originated in the early ages of the faith. It is not possible to assign its first appearance in a written form to a later period than the first century B.C.[1] The testimony of this best of witnesses to the substance of primitive Buddhism establishes the fact that *nirvâna*, far from meaning annihilation in an absolute sense, was positive exaltation and blessedness, expected to follow upon deliverance from special forms and embodiments, through detachment from the *khandas*, or elements of individuality, regarded as grounds of successive births (*sansâra*), from grief, impurity, disease, selfishness, passion, sin; in other words, a reality, which nothing in all this fateful sequence of transmigrative existence could express; an open door of freedom and release, into unknown and unimagined good; if a dream, certainly *not* a dream of death, but of escape from death.

"Patience is the highest *nirvâna:* this the word of the Buddhas."

"They who are of a thoughtful mind, constant, ever putting forth a wise energy, attain this, the highest bliss."

"Health is utmost gain; content, the best wealth; trust, the best friend; *nirvâna*, the highest joy."

"Tear away attachments (self-love) from thy being, as an autumn lotus with thy hand; and make thy way open to *nirvâna*, to rest."

"Hunger is the worst disease; embodiment, the greatest pain; to know this is *nirvâna*, the highest joy."

"He who has thoughtfulness and insight dwells near to *nirvâna*."

[1] This is the opinion of Dr. Weber, who has given a careful version of the work in German (*Ztsch. d. D. M. G.*, 1860), compiled from the Pâli text of three manuscripts, aided by the commentary of Buddhaghosha. He attaches great value to the tradition of its extreme antiquity; and regards it as "in the highest degree probable that a large portion of these strophes are either verbally Gotama's, or contain his precepts put into metrical form by his disciples." Similar views as to the date of the work are expressed by Müller in the introduction to his translation (1870), which I am glad to be able to compare with Weber's before printing the extracts made from the latter, in preparing the present volume. See also Lassen, IV. 283.

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"If like a trumpet when it is broken, thou art not roused [to speech], thou art near *nirvâna:* anger is not known in thee [or, there is no noisy clamor to thee]."

"The true sage is he who knows his former abodes, who sees heaven and hell, who *has reached the end of births*, and is perfect in wisdom."

"He who pays homage to such as *have found deliverance*, and know no fear, his merit cannot be measured."

"They who have given up attachments, and rejoice without clinging to any thing, whose frailties have been conquered, and who are full of light, *are free*, even in this world."

"He who has deep insight and wisdom, who knows the right way and the wrong, he who *has attained the highest goal*, him call I a Brahmana."

"He who has given up pleasure and pain, indifferent to both, who is *without ground* (*or germ*) *for new birth*, who has overcome all worlds, him call I a Brahmana."

"I have conquered all, I know all, in all conditions of life I am free from taint; I have left all, and through destruction of thirst I am free: having learned myself, whom shall I teach?"

"Reflection is the path of immortality: they who reflect do not die."[1]

Nirvâna is "the uncreated, the ineffable, the immortal;" "the place of repose and bliss, where embodiments cease;" "the other shore, beyond the power of death, where one is thoughtful, guileless, free from doubt and from all desires, and content."[2] The

[1] *Dhammapada*, vv. 184, 23, 204, 285, 203, 372, 134, 423, 195, 196, 89, 403, 418, 353, 21.

[2] Ibid., 383, 218, 21, 374, 114, 368, 423, 85, 86, 384, 414. D'Alwis translates these phrases somewhat differently from Müller and Weber, in accordance with his belief that nirvâna is nonentity. The difference consists in turns of expression, which are more capable of negative meaning, yet without really requiring it. For "immortality" he substitutes *non-liability to death*, as meaning escape from such liability *into nothingness;* for "place" he reads *lot* or *state*, as more suitable to the metaphorical intention of the Pâli term. It is not very apparent how (v. 221) the forsaking of *rupa* and *nâma*, "body and soul" (*lit.*, form and name), involves the "distinct denial of a soul," in any absolute sense. Mr. D'Alwis's careful enumeration of forty-six words descriptive of nirvâna is of great value; but their literal meaning, even as he gives it, fails to convince me of the justice of his conclusion. Here are some of them: "To shine;" "island, whence lot or state, of safety;" "destruction of desire;" "freedom from annoy;" "the dreadless [state];" "the endless;" "protection;" "sleep;" "the path;" "the other shore." To some a negative sense is ascribed by what seems to be a materialistic assumption. Thus "the formless" is further defined as

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Dhammapada is full of exhortations to detachment from perishable things, and to the taming of passions and selfish desires, as well as to practical goodness, in order to attain its joy and peace and liberty.

It is observable that *nirvâna* is always coupled with the active experiences of virtues, and powers over sense. Relations of the word.

"He who has entered the *void* (or, who knows the uncreated), *and* has renounced all desires."

"He who has attained the end, *and* who is fearless, having demolished the thorns of existence."[1]

To similar effect is a passage from the Vinaya, which D'Alwis (p. 35) translates thus:—

"He who has cut off the roots has made himself nonentity, and has acquired the nature of freedom from regeneration."

The same critic quotes this passage also as proving *nirvâna* to be pure negation:—

"In nirvâna, of which the mind alone can form a conception, which the eye cannot see, which is endless and every way glorious, there is neither earth, water, fire, nor air, small nor great, good nor evil; and vijnâna (consciousness) is extinguished."

It is obvious that extinction and negation are here conceived in a sense not inconsistent with invisible spiritual life, real enough to be "endless and glorious."

"that which is invisible to the senses,—*a nonentity;*" "not well brought together" as "*non-being;*" and "the unseen" as "that which has no example and no existence;" a synonymy which the authority of the most capable scholar could not induce us to accept. Nirvâna is promised in *this* life; whence Mr. D'Alwis infers that there must have been an *imperfect* form of nirvâna. The promise would seem at least as competent to prove that true nirvâna was believed to be consistent with life. The use of phrases implying a positive state he explains by the necessity of metaphorical language for all definition. But unfortunately the metaphors do not even *suggest* nonentity. Childers also (*Notes on Dhammap.*, *Journ. R. A. S.*, 1871) argues that there were two forms of *nirvâna*, a partial and a complete; and that the word is used in both these senses: which may be quite true, yet does not make it probable that the complete form was something diametrically contrary, in its very essence, to the incomplete.

[1] Ibid., 97, 351.

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Other testimonies.

We should naturally expect a greater emphasis on the negative side, a deeper sense of the perishableness of forms, in the *beginning* of this great protest against them, than when later familiarity with the thought should bring in the natural longing for positive issues of life, and results of moral endeavor. It is therefore especially significant that even in this earliest record of Buddhism we find such intense aspiration after *reality* through whatsoever sacrifice of phenomenal existence. Later stages of the faith are believed to show *nirvâna* still more definitely as a positive state. The "Lotus of the Good Law" tells of saints who have not only entered it in the present life, but reappeared in after ages to listen to the preaching of its tidings;[1] and the legends represent the Buddha himself as rejoicing at having attained this extinction of desire, and afterwards travelling from place to place, needing no other food than "the fruition of nirvâna."[2] In his youth he says: "When I have reached supreme wisdom, I will assemble all living beings, and show them the *path of immortality;* withdrawing them from the ocean of creation, I will establish them in patience, and give them the pure eye of the law."[3] And before his death, he promises to reveal to his followers his shining form, after having passed from them into final beatitude.[4] Even centuries afterwards, he is still looked to as worker of miracles, and addressed as beholder and guide of human affairs. St. Hilaire's explanation, that there are two forms of nirvâna, a complete and an incomplete, does not meet these

[1] *Lotus*, ch. xi. See also the legend of Kâsyapa, *Journ. R. A. S.*, XX. 203.

[2] Hardy, *Manual*, pp. 179–182. Müller, *Chips*, I. 233. The meaning of these references, however, does not seem to be very clear.

[3] St. Hilaire, p. 11.

[4] *Lotus*, ch. x.

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instances, where the *supreme end* of sainthood is represented as positive and active existence.

"In nirvâna" [with the northern Buddhists], says Bastian, "is no longer either birth or death: only the essence of life remains. Nirvâna is nowhere (in no special place), only because it is all-embracing and all-pervading."[1] "Far from being annihilation, as such, it is in fact annihilation of delusion, and therefore the real itself."[2] Baur gives a similar interpretation: "Nirvâna is the purely immaterial and absolute; the state to which the soul attains, when it has freed itself from all relation to material forms."[3]

"No one," says Bigandet, of the Burmese, "openly admits in practice that *neibban* and annihilation are synonymous terms: the perfected being is believed to retain his individuality, but is merged, as it were, in the abstract truth, in which he lives and rests for ever." The same writer, however, thinks that annihilation is plainly taught in the philosophical works.[4]

Sangermano gives an account of the laws of Gotama, drawn up by a Burmese talapoin in 1763, in which *nirvâna* is defined as "a state exempt from birth, old age, sickness, and death. Nothing can give an idea of it; but exemption from these and a perfect security are the things in which it consists."[5]

"The Siamese," says Alabaster,[6] "always refer to *nirvâna* as to something existing. It is a place of comfort, where there is no care." "Lovely is the glorious realm of *nirvâna*, the jewelled realm of happiness." But the ordinary Siamese do not trouble

[1] *Reisen in China*, p. 490. He mentions also works which specify two kinds of *nirvâna*.
[2] *Die Weltauffassung der Buddhisten* (Berlin, 1870), p. 22.
[3] *Die Christliche Gnosis*, p. 58.
[4] Bigandet, p. 321.
[5] *Descript. of the Burm. Emp.*, p. 80.
[6] *Wheel of the Law*, p. 165.

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themselves about it: they believe virtue will be rewarded by going to heaven.[1]

Chinese works describe this "condition in which is neither birth nor death." "Nirvâna is not like the pitcher not yet made, nor like the pitcher's nothingness when it is broken; nor like the hair of a tortoise, something imaginary. It is nothingness defined as absence of something different from itself; of covetousness, aversion, delusion."[2] The Chinese Buddhists translate nirvâna by a word that means *absolute stillness* and *rest*.[3] The Thibetans all interpret it as "emancipation."[4]

Gotama is recorded in the Lalitavistâra to have learned from a *Brahman* the way to "the place where there are neither ideas nor the absence of ideas;" and the Brahmanical descriptions of "deliverance" deal in similar negations of all possible forms of cognition. In view of all this, it is but reasonable to believe that we have, as the ideal of this Buddhist extinction, more or less clearly conceived, a complete *absorption* into freedom, from which all definite form was excluded more rigidly than in the Brahmanical, as possibility of bondage to death; a state of absolute security from renewal of a life subject to fatal changes; an escape from the limitations of consciousness and the illusions of separate existence into that ineffable life in the eternal, which to mystic faith in all ages waits *beyond* such death.[5] It is certain that "extinction" and "absorption" were left equally undefined in Hindu faith, and the distinction between them may have consisted in an intenser sense of the facts of

[1] *Wheel of the Law*, xxxviii. [2] Beal, *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 174.
[3] Neumann, *Catechism of the Shamans*, p. 40. [4] Burnouf, p. 19.
[5] Franck, *Études Orientales*, p. 49.

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sorrow, pain, and death on the part of the Buddhists than of the Brahmans; prompting them to stronger emphasis on the *negative* aspect of deliverance from these woes, on the hope that these should be *no more*, and at the same time to more earnest philanthropy in proclaiming the deliverance to mankind.

What *nirvâna*, his divine relief, was, Gotama himself does not seem to have attempted to explain.[1] How was it possible, save in the general way of absolute trust in its all-sufficiency, as shown in the sentences of the Dhammapada? And all the negations of his speculative followers do but serve to point us back to some deeper sense of infinite reality which no forms could satisfy and no terms define. It is but the old inevitable cry of renunciation, and its answering prophecy and release.

"Stop the stream valiantly, drive away the desires, O Brahmana! When you have understood the destruction of all that was made, you will understand that which was *not* made."[2]

Testimony of the dhyanas.

The steps by which, in later developments of the contemplative life, *nirvâna* was to be attained, indicate that these negations were very far from being conceived in an absolute sense. In his spiritual progress, the ascetic passes through the four *dhyânas*, or "powers of abstraction," which correspond with the *gnosis* of the Greeks, and may be defined somewhat as follows: (1) satisfaction in processes of reasoning; (2) withdrawal from these into the peace and joy of contemplation; (3) gradual release from definite forms of self-consciousness and from limitations of memory, through indifference to them, into the infinite illuminating power of the faculties, still accompanied

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 132.

[2] *Dhammapada*, v. 383.

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by enjoyment of the soul's relations to the senses; (4) perfect fulfilment of these energies, with escape from all dependence on the senses. — So far, we have steps in the "world of forms." After these follow the "formless worlds," through which the ecstatic contemplation of the saint leads him upward, in succession: (1) The infinity of space; (2) of intelligence; (3) non-existence; (4) non-existence of ideas, and the nothingness even of that fact; (5) the hindrance; (6) "nirvâna."[1] Impossible as it is to follow Oriental reverie through these regions of its flight, it is yet certain that the saint passes through "nonentity" again and again, yet is in a state of contemplation still. What can the "extinction" be to which such "non-existence" can lead? The shadowy word-play can prove only that entity and nonentity had no such strictness of meaning in this contemplative devotion as they have in the analytic mind of the West.

Meaning of these stages of devotion.

The endless repetitions and recurrences of *numbers* in Buddhist mythology are not to be taken in a literal sense: they indicate simply the perpetual *monotone* by which the dreamer's imagination is limited, and to which it perpetually returns. So these successive stages in the path of liberation, ever returning to some new formula of the same constant idea of "nonentity," and again and again attempting closer approximation to the statement of it, can hardly be supposed to indicate real processes of transition, a definite order and series of experiences. They seem to mean that the dreamer's soul was for ever haunted by boundless discontent with all definite forms under which life could present itself to

[1] For these stages, see account given in Koeppen, I. 587–592. Burnouf's *Lotus*, 814, 543, 824. St. Hilaire (p. 158) omits the fifth stage.

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minds without practical knowledge of the laws of nature, in their dealing with hereditary belief in endless transmigration and "bonds of action." They mean the inevitable, ever-recurring aspiration for release from this sad cadence which marred every utterance of the past, present, or future. In every one of these stages, in the last as well as the first, in the innermost ultimate forms to which the "nothingness" of ideas and of worlds could be traced, there still remained *the soul itself:* contemplation was still the fact of facts; and "deliverance" was a living hope till it became a full fruition.

But we have other evidence to the same effect. The nearly perfect saint, on reaching "the hindrance," may be impelled by his own nobler desires — then more than ever active and inspired, as it would seem, with the love of life's uses and opportunities — to return into new paths of discipline; and this after passing through so many forms of "nonentity"! Beyond him are other classes of saints, some of whom have delivered *themselves* from the "bonds of existence," and others have freed multitudes of their fellow-men. Yet whoever has reached the brink of fruition can, if he will, forego it for the benefit of mankind, and pass again through the sorrowful bondage with his brethren, to share with them the sure release. Now these *Bodhisattvas* (essential saints), thus able, at their own will, did they but choose to exert it, to pass into extinction at a step, after all these stages of approximate "nonentity," are found possessed of what qualities? "Morality, contemplation, wisdom, patience, compassion, energy!"[1] If this is an approach to "ex-

Return from the verge of Nirvâna.

[1] Koeppen, I. 424. These are the "pâramitâs," or six "transcendent virtues."

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tinction," it is manifest that the word must take quite other than its current meaning in our modern speech. Does it not refer us rather, once more, to the "beatitude" of the old Christian mystics, who loved to say, "In nothingness is all"?

Intelligence of the arhat.

The intense, unqualified language of contemplative piety, which knows no shades of degree or kind, describes the *arhat* (advanced saint) as one "whose virtues have lifted him above all the worlds;" as "looking over, at death, into nirvâna, free from all attachment; regarding gold and dust as alike; knowing no difference of great and small; turned away from existence, from honor, pleasure, gain, yet worshipped and blessed by all divine beings."[1] How does he indicate that the "lamp of existence and intelligence" is about to be "extinguished," after all these preparatory steps to that end? By the ebbing away of the last waves of dying mind? The very opposite. He is "acquainted with all science, and possessed of perfect insight." Here are his gifts. The science of transformations, or occult powers; the divine eye, beholding all beings and worlds at a glance; the divine ear, hearing all sounds in all worlds; knowledge of the thoughts of all creatures; remembrance of all earlier forms of existence; foresight of all future births.[2] And these powers are acquired by the combination of "indifference with intense attention!"[3] All this may be a child's dream of omnipotence, or a glimpse of man's infinite relations, or a hyperbole of man-worship which only Oriental habits of thought can explain. But it cannot be believed that a path which culminated in this could have been believed *to lead on, with one*

[1] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 38; Koeppen, I. 406. [2] Ibid. [3] *Lotus*, 819.

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step more, into the nirvâna of Burnouf and St. Hilaire.

In fine, I must say that Bunsen seems to me to come much nearer the satisfactory solution of the ideal goal of Buddhist faith, when he calls nirvâna "*inward peace*," and even maintains that no thought can be farther from it than that of annihilation of being, as we should understand this.[1] The author of the "Catena of Buddhist Scriptures" admits that "the idea of nirvâna as annihilation must be confined to one period in the history of the system, during which scholastic refinement *sought to define the condition of the Infinite.*" The schools have certainly pursued the negation of forms, qualities, experiences, through every path accessible to thought; a boundless dissatisfaction with their limits, often reaching out into mere gratification of the logical faculty in this direction by giving it free play to net the worlds through and through with its threads and webs of denial. Yet no religious mythology has so peopled them with swarming life, nor piled them in such endless series through infinite space. The earliest *nirvâna* is the "place of the freed soul:" the latest is the "paradise of imagination." The inexpressible good.

It is plain that our language cannot convey to us the actual sense of the conception, as it shone in the Oriental mind: a divine antidote, compensation, refuge, release; the redemption from those oppressive dreams of human destiny, which more energetic and practical races have escaped. This, however, is to me quite certain. The beatific crowning vision, which lay spread before the Buddhist like a waveless sea, was

[1] *God in History*, p. 348. A very appreciative view of Buddhism is also given in Alger's *Hist. of the Doct. of Fut. Life* (Part II. ch. vi.).

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positive, not negative. The devotee might liken nirvâna to the "blowing out of a lamp," or insist on its vacuity and its pure nullity ever so strongly. His very delight in the process of freeing himself from recognizing the reality of conceptions which imposed the "bonds of action and transmigration" *was itself a reality, and refilled every vacuum* which he created by that process in the very instant of its creation. It is but a little way that metaphysical terms can go towards fathoming the experience or stating the necessities of the spirit. Not "extinction," not even a dreamless "rest," can define a *highest good*, that had only to be presented to millions to be hailed and accepted. Forever true is it that men do not spend their lives in preaching, laboring, proselyting, in love and sacrifice, — in behalf of what has no positive substantial being for them to lay hold on. Despair of existence and longing for torpidity cannot inspire them with the love of uses and the ardor to help and deliver mankind. That for which they invent a name, to be glorified, even as it is elsewhere a praise to glorify the name of God, must not be thought "the horrible faith that worships nonentity."[1] Let us do better justice to a spiritual phase, which modern habits of thought are but too likely to misjudge.

Outward grounds of Buddhist negation.

But *why* this discontent with the conditions of existence, this rejection of all its relations, this insistence on misery as universal? It is easy to see what made the Hindu conception of life a burden. Transmigration, that endless monotone;

[1] St. Hilaire, *Buddha et sa Relig.*, p. 140. It must appear singular, on this hypothesis, that such elaborate compends as the *Prâtimoksha* (*Ritual of Chinese Buddhists*, *R. A. S.*, vol. xix.) should not have one word expressive of the blessings of being annihilated.

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transmission of moral consequence through an interminable future, not lighted by the hopes that social progress inspires; caste and superstition, overshadowing all thought, motive, and labor, dominating this life and the future; the barbarities of law and of sacrifice, cheapening the estimate of life; absence of personal liberty and social opportunity; no scientific comprehension of those benignities of natural law, which alleviate the common lot of disease, decay, and death; depressing languors of a tropical climate; its incidents of cheap food and rapidly multiplying population, and the results in enormous rents and interest rates, and the lowest possible wages; crises of famine; extremes of social condition; the accumulated social oppression and misery that weighed upon the life of India for centuries, — these surely were adequate outward motive for the mighty protest of Buddhism against the conditions of human existence. It was the instinctive reaction of the soul against these issues of ignorance, inactivity, and wrong; its unconscious cry for science; its appeal to the ideal, the infinite, the inconceivable even, for the liberty denied it in every attainable form of actual life. It was, further, the nemesis of an inveterate contempt for things visible and concrete; the old Brahmanical notion of their unreality brought to its ultimate terms; driving man's ideals of contemplation from a world they had no power nor will to use; pronouncing a world on these conditions to be, *as a form of cognition*, thoroughly null and void; yet only to reinstate it in a new form; to justify it on another plane; to make it real as a field of uses, through the power of humane sentiment and the might of moral purpose. The unity of all

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being, which had before meant the common insignificance of each and all, now meant the one appeal that came to every heart from a universal sorrow and need. What contemplation had to surrender, pity saved.

Analogies.

This reaction from overwhelming social misery to a spirit of humanity, to pity, forgiveness, and moral consecration, has a counterpart six centuries afterwards in the birth of Christianity, and its call to brotherhood amidst the political and spiritual miseries of the Roman Empire. Other points of relation are no less impressive. Both religions had their rejection of "this world," turning from hopeless conditions (as they seemed) to an invisible ideal refuge, "the other shore." In Christianity the call to forsake all and follow the Master grew into an asceticism as thorough as the Buddhist. As a goal of human destiny, *nirvâna* in its utmost supposed negation is not the saddest conceivable. Annihilation is a blessing compared with everlasting penalties and pains; and the "atheism" of Buddhism, were it as absolute as it has been supposed, would be piety compared with the worship of a God who could inflict them.

As refuge from the vanities and miseries that in all ages have turned so much of human life into weariness and utter failure, whirling it away like chaff, all great religions have pointed to some form of spiritual rest. Nor can I think the *nirvâna* of the compassionate Buddha all unrelated to that inward calm, that divine release, which the voice of a noble woman has made so real and so genial for all of us: —

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"O earth so full of dreary noises,
O men with wailing in your voices,
O delvèd gold the wailers heap,
O strife, O curse that o'er it fall!—
God makes a silence through you all:
He giveth his beloved sleep."

Pourna, the son of a freedman, become a disciple of Buddha, determines to convert a wild tribe to the law of peace and love. Buddha, having suggested to him the perils in this enterprise, and finding him prepared to meet them in the spirit of absolute self-sacrifice, dismisses him with these words: "It is well, Pourna, thou art worthy of this work. Go then; having delivered thyself, deliver others; *having reached the other shore, bring others thither; arrived at complete nirvâna, cause others to arrive there like thyself.*"[1] The affirmation.

No dreamless sleep in this ideal of duty; but perpetual return from the brink of fruition to the sacrifice and service, whereof none can see the completion; constant obedience to the impulse to teach and share and save, through worlds on worlds. Wearisome it may be to think, even, of this eternal sense of tasks unaccomplished, of this endless didactic function, this unremitting manipulation of the moral element in all mankind; but it is at least vital and positive, and fills immortality with meaning and demand. It gives, I think, adequate answer, in its very definition, to the judgment of Müller, that *nirvâna*, in Buddha's mind, "if not annihilation, was yet nothing but metaphysical selfishness; a relapse into that being which is nothing but itself."[2]

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 97.

[2] *Chips*, &c., I. 287.

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And even the *dhyanas* — which, like the "gnosis" of certain Christian heretical sects, claim to be paths for the liberation of the soul through interior vision — become, in the light of this practical earnestness and ardor, enduring gates, not into "nonentity," but into wisdom; though it be of the Oriental, not of the Saxon nor the Hebrew kind.

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III.

ETHICS AND HUMANITIES.

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ETHICS AND HUMANITIES.

WE pass from the speculative to the practical aspect of Buddhism.

"The Four Supreme Truths are Pain, the Cause of Pain, the Extinction of Pain, and the Way to the Extinction of Pain."[1] To "turn the wheel of these four truths" is the sum of virtue and power, of the Buddha's word and work.[2] The tragedy of faith.

"Birth is pain; sickness, sorrow, death, are pain; union with the hated, separation from the loved, not to reach what one desires, all that makes perception, is pain; the passing away of all that is born is pain."[3]

Pain the very substance of life! Absolute renunciation of attachment (*upádána*) to forms of existence, the only path of release! Release itself definable by no definite form of human joy! Was not the salvation sadder than the doom from which it freed? Had not this Hindu dream-work ended logically in practical despair? It has seemed so to most observation from Christian points of view. But let us look further.

[1] Burnouf, p. 629.

[2] This phrase was probably used in contrast to the "wheel of transmigration," whose endless revolution of births the counter-movement of the law of Buddha should arrest. Leon Feer in *Journ. Asiat.* for 1870, p. 438.

[3] Ibid. (p. 367), from *Dharmaśakrasutras*. So Wuttke, II. 537.

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Buddhism has well been called the most tragical of human faiths. It accepted the brooding sense of change and death, into which science and social energy had not yet entered, to give foothold for ideals of progress. It would not evade the facts. Is the world then nought? *Is* "the body like foam; sense a bubble; consciousness a circle on a stream; action the shadow that falls on it; knowledge the play of illusions"? Let us accept the consequences of that truth, though all the old landmarks of faith be swept away, and the gods above, with their heavens, turn to mortalities like the rest. Transmigration shall go to the tests of moral order, and end in a truth deeper than itself. That test at least shall abide, though the interests of personality disappear, and not a chink be left open for freedom. If there is no smile in the universe, let us make the most of the frown, nor fear but good ending shall come of that; nay, turn the *frown* itself into a dream, and so overcome the world.

This is tragedy; and it is heroism also, which is an essential part of tragedy. Out of an unfathomable loss, an absolute renunciation, to win not stoical resignation only, but a purpose that should fill life with present good, and so disprove the premise of despair!

"Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us: let us dwell free from hatred among men who hate."

"Let us live happily, free from greed among the greedy."

"Let us live happily, though we call nothing our own. We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness."

"He who has given up both victory and defeat,—he, the contented, is happy."

"He who applies himself to the doctrine of Buddha brightens this world, like the moon when free from clouds."[1]

[1] *Dhammap.*, vv. 197–201, 382.

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But life meant more than happiness. It was not enough for the Buddhist to emancipate himself from pain. The universal doom of sorrow must touch his heart with a sympathy as universal. He could not rest till he had taught the whole world the secret of reconciliation with destiny. Suffering, in that early day also, led out into a gospel of universal love. And so the substance of what seemed lost — of personality, of freedom, of faith — was, in one sense at least, saved.

For the Buddha came, as all Buddhas had come, "to save the human race" from its miseries; and Buddhahood itself lay open to every one. Gotama, it is constantly affirmed, knew but one human nature, and all men as brothers. The gospel of love.

"My law is a law of mercy for all."[1]

"Proclaim it freely to all men: it shall cleanse good and evil, rich and poor alike; it is large as the spaces of heaven, that exclude none."[2]

"Whoever loves will feel the longing to save not himself alone, but all others. Let him say to himself: When others are learning the truth, I will rejoice at it, as if it were myself. When others are without it, I will mourn the loss as my own. We shall do much, if we deliver many; but more, if we cause them to deliver others, and so on without end. So shall the healing word embrace the world, and all who are sunk in the ocean of misery be saved."[3]

All; for the Buddhist scriptures teach that even in the hells there are "heavens of refuge" for souls that are expiating their sins, in which they are preserved from catastrophes that befall the world as a whole, at the end of a kalpa-period. There is ever a Brahmâ in the universe, even though a Buddha be not living in the kalpa; and "he protects his abode."[4]

[1] Burnouf, pp. 198, 205–211.
[2] Koeppen, p. 130, from Thibetan collection.
[3] *Tsing-tu-uen* in Wuttke, II. 563.
[4] *Mahâvanśa* (Upham), note to ch. xix.

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Gotama compares himself to "a father, who rescues his children from a burning house;" to "a guide who leads a caravan to fortunate lands;" to "a physician who cures the blind with herbs brought from the holy Himalayas;" to "the friendly cloud, that brings rain to thirsty plants."[1]

Religious democracy.

It was pure democracy.[2] The veil of the Hindu temple was rent. Eternal principles brought class privilege to judgment; and the unity of an idea swept the field clear of all exclusive claims. Gotama took his disciples from the lowest, as readily as from the highest class. This prince came down from his throne, and walked with poor and outcast people; joined the hands which caste forbade to touch each other; reached out his own to the pariah, who forthwith arose out of the dust, the equal of kings. Did not Śudra and Brahman stand under one destiny, one law of right and wrong, one reward and one penalty? For all one path of duty, — "to live poor and pure."

"Look closely, and you shall see no difference between the body of a prince and the body of a slave. What is essential is that which may dwell in the most miserable frame, and which the wisest have saluted and honored. The Brahman like the Chandâla is born of woman: where see you the difference, that one should be noble and the other vile?"[3]

Moral distinctions effaced all others. All tests merged in the test of character: all words found honor or shame in this ordeal alone.[4]

"The talk of 'high and low castes,' of 'the pure Brahmans, the only sons of Brahmâ,' is nothing but sound: the four castes are equal."[5]

[1] *Lotus of the Good Law*, ch. iii. v. vii.
[2] Lassen, II. 440.
[3] Burnouf, p. 209, 376.
[4] See *Dhammap.*, ch. xix.
[5] Sutras, quoted in Hardy's *Manual*, pp. 80, 81.

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"It has been said that it is better to give alms to a Brahman than to a man of mean birth. But Gotama denies this, saying, 'As the husbandman sows in wet weather on the hills, and in dry weather in the valleys, and at all times in the ground that can be at all times watered, so the man who would be blessed in both worlds will give alms to all; nor do birth and eminence make the right to be honored."[1]

"He is *vasala* [a low person], who cherishes hatred, torments living beings, steals or kills or commits impurity; who does not pay his debts, maltreats aged parents, or fails to support them; who gives evil counsel, hides truth, does not return hospitality nor render it, exalts himself and debases others, ignores their virtues, is impatient of their success. Not by birth, but by conduct, is one a *vasala*."

"A *chandala*, by his virtues, was born in a Brahma world; but the Brahman who is vicious is in shame now, and suffers hereafter; and his caste shall not release him."[2]

"Ânanda, one of the earliest disciples [and a very noble character], sitting once beside a well, asked a drink of water from a Chandâla woman, who was drawing from the well. She answered, 'How dost thou ask water of me, an outcast, who may not touch thee without offence?' Ananda answered: 'My sister, I ask not of thy caste: I ask thee water to drink.' And Buddha took her among his disciples."[3]

The equality of the sexes in Buddhism[4] is ascribed to the influence of Ânanda over his master, who is said to have conceded to women the right to enter the religious profession in the twenty-fifth year of his teaching.[5] But it is not easy to see how, upon his principles, he could have opposed it in the first. No distinction of sex more than of castes could have been valid, for such a gospel.[6] The following legend is from the Singhalese Sutras:—

[1] Hardy, p. 80.

[2] Sutra, quoted by D'Alwis, pp. 123–125.

[3] Burnouf, p. 205.

[4] With the one exception of the Buddhaship itself, which is a privilege of males. Christianity, too, allows pure Christhood only to a man. Hardy's *Manual*, p. 104.

[5] Burnouf, p. 278; Koeppen, I. 104.

[6] Franck, *Etudes Orientales*, p. 39.

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"The wives of five hundred princes, whose husbands had become disciples, desired to follow their example; and the mother of Buddha requested of him their admission. It was clearly seen by him that former Buddhas had admitted women; but he feared it would give occasion for speaking against his institutions [so his disciples interpreted him], and did not at once accede to the request. Then Prajâpati (his mother) said to them: 'Children, Buddha has thrice refused to "admit us to profession:" let us take it on ourselves, and then go to him; and he cannot but receive us.' So they cut off their hair, put on the proper robe, and taking earthen bowls journeyed with painful feet to Buddha. And Ananda, seeing them, was filled with sorrow, and again brought their petition to Buddha, who said: 'Are the Buddhas born only for the benefit of men? Have not Wisakha, and many others, entered the paths? The entrance is open for women as well as for men.'"[1]

In the "Lotus," the Buddha appears on his holy mountain, surrounded by multitudes of deities and disciples; and among them are six thousand female saints. In the legends generally, he admits men and women alike to the bliss of nirvâna.[2] Although, in one or two of these, a female becomes a male in order to obtain sainthood, such individual case must not be taken as representing the Buddhist idea of equality.[3]

There are rules in the Sutras commanding kindness to servants, and even the emancipation of slaves after they shall have labored a given time.[4] The Mahâvanśa describes a damsel of supernatural beauty, who, though born of the lowest grade of outcasts, was loved and espoused by a prince, and who had acquired her charms by such good works as sweeping and cleaning the floor at the foot of a banyan, for the sake of worship.[5]

[1] Hardy's *Manual*, p. 310.
[2] Ibid., 314; *Lotus*, ch. xi.
[3] See Bastian, *Reisen in China*, &c., p. 586. Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, ch. xvii.
[4] Hardy, 482.
[5] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxxiii.

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What possibility of exclusive distinctions in a creed which affirms that the most degraded person may one day become ruler of the highest heavens; that the loftiest king may sink below the least of his subjects; and that more than thirty saints have transmitted the true doctrine from the time of the Buddha, belonging indifferently to all the castes?

Like other religious reformers, Gotama appealed to the poor, both from sympathy and tenderness and as finding them more open to his word.

"Hard it is for a rich man to know the way, easy for a poor one."

"A poor man filled his scrip with a handful of flowers; but the rich poured in thousands of bushels in vain."

"Of all the lamps lighted in his honor, one only, brought by a poor woman, lasted through the night."[1]

It would appear from the study of the earliest Buddhist writings, that, while the philosophical teachings of the school were delivered, as we should suppose them likely to be, in the sacred language of the Brahmans, whenever specially addressed to them, — the people were taught the moral and spiritual substance of the faith of the reformers in their own different dialects, and in a thoroughly popular style.[2] And we may be sure that this gospel had its pentecostal gift of tongues for all the waiting tribes of northern India. This assumption of the people's cause, this direct appeal to their mind and heart, which constitutes an essential part of the prophet's inspiration in all religions, was probably the main element of Gotama's personal work. Fifteen hundred years afterwards Dante wrote his great poem, —

[1] Koeppen, 131.

[2] Lassen, II. 492; Duncker, II. 194; Weber's *Vorlesungen*, 258; Muir, *Sansk. Texts*, II.

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wherein day broke on the ecclesiastical slavery of the Middle Ages, as it rose in Gotama's gospel on that of the East, — in the people's own Italian, not in the learned tongue. The preachers whom Buddha sent out to lay open a long sealed life and hope to the people, and to rebuke the indolence and exclusiveness of the clergy, remind us of Wiclif's itinerant "poor priests," sent out for a like purpose in England when two thousand years had gone by. And this was the burden of their prophecy: —

"Forsake all evil, bring forth good, master thy own thought: such is Buddha's path to end all pain."[1]

There is an old ballad literature of Buddhism, called the *gâthâs*, — fragments of which appear throughout the great Sutras of the faith. They are in an obsolete language of mixed dialects, and are believed to be the production of ancient bards, probably successors of Buddha, who went about singing the new gospel in these simple strains, which must have come from the heart of the people and gone straightway to it. They are always quoted with great respect, in later writings.[2] So natural and so genial the impulse of Buddhism that it flowed at once into song; and in the earlier works, like the Lotus and the Lalitavistâra, the doctrine first stated in prose is always repeated in poetic form.

Universal love.

It was an impulse to convert the whole world to a philosophy and a faith that should bring deliverance from the woes of life. The Lotus says: "it is much less criminal to do injury to a Buddha for ages, than to say an unkind word to a simple

[1] Koeppen, I. p. 224; *Dhammapada*, ch. xiv.
[2] See Muir, II. 125.

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teacher who is instructing any one in the law." There is no parallel to this missionary zeal, this boundless pity and love, but in Christianity; nor yet in Christianity in its earliest form; but only when Paul's protest of ethnic sympathy broke down the wall between Jew and Gentile, bond and free. In Buddha was neither Chinese nor Mongol nor Hindu; neither Brahman nor Chandala, prince nor slave. What injustice we shall do to this immense purpose which swept over all Eastern Asia, if we imagine it was only a gospel of self-annihilation and miserable despair, after all, that these apostles had to offer! Do not tell us that mere love of self-destruction, or despair of life, will make men take the whole world into their hearts, and forsake the meditations in which they place their own salvation, to share their truth with all other men. A similar ardor has been held to be sufficient evidence to prove that the early Christians were sustained by a glorious hope. The Brahmans charge Buddha with saying, "Let all the sins ever committed fall on me, that the world may be saved."[1]

"As a mother, so long as she lives, watches over her child, her only child, so among all beings let boundless good-will prevail. If a man be of this mind, as long as he is awake, whether standing or walking, or sitting or lying, there comes to pass the saying: 'This place is the abode of holiness.'"[2]

The four virtuous inclinations, according to the Siamese Buddhists, are: (1) seeking for others the happiness one desires for himself; (2) compassionate interest in all creatures; (3) love for, and pleasure in, all beings; (4) impartiality.[3]

[1] *Kumârila*, quoted by Müller, *S. Lit.*, p. 80.
[2] *Kuddakapatha*, in *Journ. R. A. S.* (1868).
[3] Alabaster's *Wheel of the Law*, p. 198.

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Buddhism and Christianity originated in ages of despondency, when men, having few recognized civil and political interests, turned naturally to personal sympathy with each other, and the desire of rendering moral and spiritual help. In both cases, such circumstances tended to produce contempt for the outward world, and a certain subjection to the darker side of life; an eye to destructive, or saddening destinies: — for the one religion centering in a sense of transiency in every form of being; for the other, in a sense of moral evil, of "sin" at the root of every soul. The history of these two great gospels of love has, of course, revealed the effect of such excessive forms of discouragement, on the quality of spiritual methods and promises of deliverance.

That the Buddhists preached sad tidings instead of glad ones, universal pain and utter self-abnegation, must not cover the fact that they preached liberty and humanity: we must, on the contrary, derive from this latter fact some happier interpretation of what seems enfeebling and even heart-crushing in their theory of life.

If this belief was indeed so hopeless, then it is only the more creditable to human nature that the sympathies should not have been paralyzed by it, but softened and expanded with tenderest pity. Let Christendom ask itself what would be likely to become of those affections which it claims to have unfolded and set free, but which its religious education makes so largely dependent on faith in a future heaven, if its confessors should be compelled to accept what they hold to be the *nirvâṇa* of Buddhist hope in place of these agreeable expectations. Yet nirvâna has given to millions of those heathen souls a peace which "heaven" fails to

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supply for millions of these Christian ones. The less it promises of happiness, the more it throws love back on its own nobility for support. If "cold speculation," "lifeless negation," "atheism," "nihilism," can stir such vital warmth as Buddhism can show, is it not a stronger evidence of the upward pressure of the soul, than for faith in a personal Father, who watches over all his children, to stir much more? "I do not hesitate," says Burnouf, "to translate the Buddhist *mâitri* by the term 'universal love.'"[1]

Yes: we will call it tragedy, and of no mean sort. I know of nothing in the history of religion more pathetic; yet there are few things that should suggest such respect for the soul. This darkness of a dreamer's thought of change and death, what a pall it spread over life! "Once," says the legend, "Buddha smiled, and the beam of that smile irradiated the universe; but instantly came forth a voice saying, It is vain, it cannot stay." Religion indeed has not been wont to recognize pleasure as compatible with sainthood; and yet the smile is even further from the Buddha than from the Christ. But in this shadow of contemplation what unquenchable light shines!

Inspires respect for the soul.

"Than Buddha," says even St. Hilaire, who believes it possible to construct his biography historically, and has attempted to do so, "there is, with the sole exception of the Christ, no purer nor more touching figure among the founders of religions. His life is without blemish: he is the finished model of the heroism, the self-renunciation, the love, the sweetness he commands."[2] Abel Rémusat grants that to call Buddhism the Christianity of the East is to give, on the whole, a good idea of the importance of

Testimonies of opponents.

[1] *Lotus*, p. 300.

[2] *Le Bouddha, Introd.*, p. v.

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the services rendered by this form of religion to mankind.[1] Cunningham, who loosely styles it "an imposture," yet defines it as "an enthusiasm and a benevolence" [strange qualities for imposture]; and describes its "peaceful progress, illuminated by the cheerful faces of the sick, the crippled, and the poor, in monastic hospitals, and by the smiles of travellers reposing in Dharmasalas by the waysides."[2] "The Buddhists," says Wuttke, "are the only heathen people who have conceived of peacefully converting all mankind to one belief: theirs alone in heathen history is a religion, not of one people, but of humanity."[3] "The *only* heathen people;" yet, as he allows, apparently without noticing what the fact involves, a people far outnumbering any other body of heathen; and, he might have added, rivalling Christianity in the count of its disciples and its sects.

Its active elements.

This love of all beings, which Buddhism, like Christianity, declares to be the sum of its motives, is not the mere dreamy passive sentiment its aim at detachment from the world and life would, for our modes of thought, imply. It has been said to "reach beyond Christianity," at least theoretically, "since it embraces not men only, but all the creatures."[4] Its earliest commands, the first lesson to the convert, were indeed prohibitions only: not to kill, nor steal, nor commit unchaste actions, nor lie, nor be drunken. But these were initiatory to more positive duty. Its six cardinal virtues (pâramitâs) are compassion, morality, patience, energy, contemplation, wisdom.[5] And its moral disciplines were as positive as possible.

[1] *Mélanges Posthumes*, p. 237.
[2] *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 54.
[3] *Geschichte d. Heidenthums*, II. 563.
[4] Koeppen, I. 313.
[5] Ibid., 450.

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"Never is wrath stilled by wrath, only by reconciliation: this is an everlasting law."

"Overcome evil with good, the avaricious with generosity, the false with truth."

"Thoughtful heed is the way of immortality: indolence of death."

"Attack vigorously what is to be done: a careless pilgrim only scatters the dust of his passions more widely."

"As the plant sheds its withered flowers, so men should shed passions and hates."

"One day of endeavor is better than a hundred years of sloth."

"Thy self is its own defence, its own refuge; it atones for its own sins; none can purify another."

"Watch thyself with all diligence, and hold thyself in as the spirited steed is held by its owner."

"Well-makers lead the water; fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters break the wood; and the wise fashion themselves."

"Master thyself: so mayest thou teach others, and easily tame them, after having tamed thyself; for self is hardest to tame."

"Never forget thy own duty for the sake of another's, however great."

"Give, if thou art asked, from the little thou hast, and thou shalt go near the gods."

"Haste to do good: the slothful in virtue learns to love evil."

"Rouse thyself: be not idle. Follow the law of virtue."

"Think not lightly of evil; drop by drop the jar is filled: think not lightly of good; the wise is filled with purity, gathering it drop by drop." [1]

The Dhammapada.

These are sentences from one of the oldest of the sacred books of Buddhism, the Dhammapada. Its earnest dealing with life and duty may be noted in the titles of some of its chapters: "Reflection;" "the Fool;" "the Wise;" "Evil;" "Punishment;" "Old Age;" "Self;" "The World;" "the Awakened;" "Pleasure;" "Anger;" "Impurity;" "the Downward Course;" "Thirst;" "the

[1] *Dhammapada*, vv. 5, 223, 21, 313, 112, 377, 165, 379–380, 145, 157–159, 166, 224, 116, 168, 121.

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Way." It rouses the moral sense to note the essential qualities and consequences of conduct. It tells those who are inclined to detraction that, "while they look after the faults of others, their own are growing;" that "body, tongue, and mind must be controlled." It tells the slayer, the liar, the drunkard, the thief, the man who covets his neighbor's wife, that they "pull up their own life by the root." It reminds the thoughtless that "his sin will come back upon him, like fine dust thrown against the wind; that the universe has no place where it will not find him out." It warns the self-indulgent that "what is good and wholesome for the life is hard to win;" that "the body and the royal chariot alike decay, but the virtue of the righteous, which makes us to know what is good, never grows old."

"Mean is the scent of sandal-wood: best to the gods is the fragrance that rises from the good."[1]

This "way of release" is indeed in detachment of the soul from all finite relations. The burden of its teaching is:—whoso loveth father or mother more than me, and leaveth not all desires to follow me, is not worthy of me. In its repulsion of the pleasures of sense, it goes so far as to say, "Love nothing, if thou wouldst be free from bonds."[2] Yet it can speak tenderly of human relations when it would enforce the immortality of virtue.

"As friends and kindred hail the long absent at his return in health, so when the just man goes from this world to another, his good deeds receive him, as friend greets friend."[3]

[1] *Dhammapada*, 253 246–7, 125–7, 163, 151, 56.
[2] Ibid., 211. [3] Ibid., 219, 220.

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Nor in the humanities which it inculcates does Buddhism fail to recognize either the full demands of all human ties, whether of kindredship or sympathy, or the delight that comes with their service. Buddhist humanities.

"As the bee, without destroying the color or perfume of the flower, gathers the sweetness with his mouth and wings, so the riches of the true friend gradually accumulate; and the increase is constant, like the growth of the hillock which the white ant steadily builds."

"The wise man searches for the friend thus gifted, as the child seeks its mother." [1]

The domestic virtues are far from being disparaged in Buddhist writings, or in the practice of Buddhist communities. On the contrary, they are strictly enjoined and enforced. Notwithstanding the sanctity of celibacy in his law, the great importance believed to have been ascribed by Gotama to filial sentiment, and indeed to every domestic duty, has been of great service in maintaining the moral inviolability of the family. He refused to receive into the ministry those who had not the consent of their parents.[2] The legends record his tenderness to his mother's memory; and his visit to the heaven where she dwelt, to teach her the "law of salvation;" and his declarations, that, "next to that law, the father and mother are, for a son, deity itself," — that "it is better for him to honor them than the gods of heaven and earth," — and that, "if he should carry them on his shoulders for a hundred years, he could not repay them for their care."[3] Buddhism discourages polygamy: so that throughout its dominions this custom The domestic virtues.

[1] Hardy, p. 484.
[2] Bennett's *Life of Gandama, from the Burmese* (*Am. Or. Journ.*, III.).
[3] Koeppen, I. 473; St. Hilaire, p. 92.

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is exceptional, endured rather than allowed, even in the rich and powerful; and in Ceylon, Siam, and elsewhere, monogamy only is legal.[1]

It makes the wife the companion of the husband, assigning her a freedom unknown to other Oriental religions, and she shares his public and private activity.[1] There is significance in the legend already mentioned, that Gopâ, the wife of Gotama, renounced the use of the veil as soon as married, on the ground that it was unworthy of a woman, who knew her modesty and virtue to be open to the gods, to hide her face from the world.[2] "Women in Burmah have the custody of their husbands' cash, and do the chief part of all buying and selling; and their intercourse with foreigners as well as countrymen is open and unrestricted. Private schools for girls are not uncommon, and no obstacle is placed in the way of female education. Females of the higher classes do not contemn industry, nor affect the listlessness of some Orientals."[3] In Siam, men of all ranks are greatly aided by the energy of their wives, especially in public affairs. Women retail goods and make trading voyages on their own account, and are as free in their movements as men.[4]

The *polyandry* of the Thibetan tribes is not a Buddhist institution: it is ascribed to the poverty of the steppes, which renders it difficult for one man to support a family; to the necessity of protection to the wife during the long absence of the husband on trading journeys, and to the inferiority of females to males in point of numbers.[5]

[1] See authorities in Koeppen, I. 474. [2] St. Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. 9.
[3] Malcom's *Travels in Burman Empire*: Notes, ch. iii.
[4] *Journal of Indian Archipelago* (1847).
[5] Lloyd's *Himalayas*, Koeppen, 476.

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No teacher ever accorded a higher place to modesty and to chastity than Gotama. His monks, in the extravagance of ascetic discipline, were even forbidden to look upon a woman, and, if they spoke to one, were to say inwardly, "In a corrupt world, I ought to be a lotus without spot." The Dhammapada declares that "so long as the love of man towards woman is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage." Yet, by a turn not uncommon in this Oriental preaching of superlatives and absolutes, these same monks are bidden to "treat older women as their mothers, those but a little older than themselves as elder sisters, and those a little younger as their younger sisters." Modesty and chastity.

The excessive care with which the relations of the sexes were guarded was indeed a part of the moral reaction of Buddhism on a social condition, the character of which may be inferred from the habit of the Brahmanical ascetics to go naked. Against this custom, Gotama protested with special energy. His mendicants must be clothed, however starved or destitute; and there are legends of very early date expressive of his indignation at the opposite custom.[1] There is a tone of satire in the language of the Dhammapada on these uncivilized ways of attaining sainthood. "Not nakedness, nor dirt, nor fasting, nor lying on the ground, nor rubbing with dust, nor sitting in one posture, can purify a mortal who has not overcome his desires."[2] In an old Buddhist legend, a damsel, seeing some of these offensive ascetics, cries out, "O mother! if these are saints, what must sinners be like?"

[1] Burnouf, p. 312. [2] *Dhammapada*, v. 141.

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Its admission of women into the religious life[1] enabled Buddhism to enforce these better ideas of social decency. It may here be observed that the very earliest notices we have of Buddhism — those of Megasthenes, and Clement of Alexandria — mention the devotees and philosophers of this faith as consisting of women as well as men.[2]

Friendship.

The Buddhist idea of *friendship* is thus given in Singhalese Sutras: —

"The true friend is he who is faithful in prosperity and adversity, a friend who brings his sympathy. He prevents you from doing wrong, urges you to do well; tells you what you did not know, and teaches you to enter the true paths; defends you when he hears you disparaged; saves you from low habits; soothes your fears; divides his substance with you."[3]

"When any one tells what he heard here or there, to put friends at enmity or sow dissension, or by insinuation leads friends to question each other's sincerity, it is slander, and will be punished in future births."[4]

As in Stoicism, so here, personal independence is made to teach the finer uses of companionship, and the real substance of mutual help.

"If a traveller does not meet with one who is his better or his equal, who is wise and sober, let him walk alone, like a lonely elephant, like a king."

"If one wise man be associated with another, he will at once perceive the truth, as the tongue a taste."

"He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquillity is free from fear. Trust is the best of relatives. [Yet] if he find a prudent companion, he may walk with him, overcoming all dangers."

"Friends are pleasant; pleasant is mutual enjoyment; a good work is pleasant in the hour of death; pleasant the state of a father, pleasant the state of a mother."

[1] See Hardy, *Manual*, 39, 311.
[2] Kruse's *Indiens Alte Geschichte*, p. 124.
[3] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 484.
[4] Ibid., p. 471.

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"If you see a wise man who shows what is to be avoided, and who administers reproofs, follow that wise man."

"Have for friends the best of men, — men of pure life, who are not slothful."[1]

Gotama in the legends is perpetually serving others, in every kind of emergency; not the least frequent form of his service being the reconciliation of enemies, in accordance with the precept ascribed to him from the beginning, "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love."[2] He is indeed believed to have voluntarily endured infinite trials, through numberless ages and births, that he might deliver mankind; foregoing the right to enter *nirvâna*, and casting himself again and again into the stream of human life and destiny, for this purpose alone, — of teaching the one way of deliverance from pain into freedom.[3] Buddha's humanity.

"This way was preached by me, when I had understood the removal of the thorns."

"And you yourself must make effort. The Buddhas are but preachers. It is the thoughtful that are freed from the bondage of Mâra (the tempter)."[4]

This persistent moral energy is the ideal held before the Buddhist devotee. Positive helpfulness, through real sacrifice and lowly service, is the core of the doctrine.

"One does not belong to himself: how much less do his sons and wealth belong to him!"

"The good delights in this world and the next; he delights in his own work; happy when he thinks of that which he does; happier still when going on the good path."

[1] *Dhammap.*, 61, 329, 65, 204, 205, 331, 332, 76, 78, 375.
[2] Ibid., 5. See Hardy, *passim*; Buddhaghosha's Parables, &c.
[3] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 98.
[4] *Dhammap.*, 275, 276.

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"Like a well-trained steed, touched by the whip, be active; and by faith, virtue, energy, meditation, and discernment, you will overcome, perfected in knowledge and in conduct."[1]

It has been thought that earlier Buddhism shows no traces of a definite belief in future places of punishment for the wicked; that this dogma grew up with the growth of a hierarchy.[2] If such was the fact, it must have been so for the reason that the first apostles of this faith were too much absorbed in the zeal of pity to find room for prophesying wrath. But, while even the later forms of Buddhism do not assert the dogma of eternal punishment,[3] the opinion just stated is hardly confirmed by the documents of the earlier time which are within our reach. Buddhism found the transmigration-hells in full currency, in Brahmanical faith. The Dhammapada consigns the wicked thither after death with great directness of speech.[4] Yet, in all description of moral penalty, it refers the evil-doer to the essential quality and present effects of vice, not to an arbitrary punishment in the future.

"The evil-doer burns by his own deeds, as if burnt by fire."

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with evil thought, pain follows, as the wheel the foot of him who draws the carriage."

"Him who lives seeking pleasure and uncontrolled, the tempter will overcome, as the wind throws down a weak tree."

"The evil-doer mourns when he sees the evil of his own work. He suffers when he thinks of the evil he has done: he suffers more when going on the evil path."

"Thoughtlessness is the path of death. They who are thoughtless are dead already. An evil deed follows the fool, smouldering like fire covered by ashes."

[1] *Dhammap.*, 62, 16, 18, 144. [2] Koeppen, I. 239.
[3] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.*, p. 18; Müller's *Dhammap.*, p. xciv.
[4] Ibid., v. 140.

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"It crushes the wicked, as a diamond breaks a stone: it brings him down, as a creeper the tree it surrounds."[1]

"The wrong-doer, thinking on his conduct, is constantly in fear. Even crimes committed long ago trouble him; as the shadow of a great rock reaches far into the distance at the setting of the sun."[2]

The extravagant strain in which the Master's self-sacrifice and humanity are described in later mythology must weaken the practical influence of the moral law on the lives of his followers; just as those elements in the New Testament representation of Jesus, which take him outside human experience and sympathy, have issued in much sentimental worship of a far-off preternatural ideal, in place of respect for the real laws of human character. Yet it is to be remembered that for Buddhism this exaggerated tone is not, as it is for Western civilization, out of keeping with ordinary, habitual thought, with common sense and real intercourse; and therefore creates no reaction of indifference, irresponsibility, skepticism, or contempt. Its exaggerated tone.

The Dhammapada emphasizes moral personality as strongly as Stoicism or Platonism; insisting on its independence and self-sustainment, on its authority as source of all other values, and on the bliss of its inward life. Character.

"All that we are is the issue of our thought."

"Poison affects not one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does no evil."

"Not even a god, not Mâra, nor Brahma, could change into defeat the victory of a man over himself."

"Self is the lord of self: who else could be the lord?"

"Let no one forget his own duty for the sake of another's."

"Better than ruling the world, better than going to heaven, than lordship over all, is the reward of the first step in virtue."

[1] *Dhammap.*, vv. 136, 1, 7, 15, 17, 21, 71, 123, 161, 162.
[2] *Singhalese Sutra*, Hardy, 485.

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"The fields are damaged by weeds, and man by wishing."

"From greed comes grief, from greed comes fear."

"As a rock is not shaken by the wind, so the wise falter not in praise or blame: they are serene like a deep lake."

"The just man, who speaks truly, and does his own work, the world will love."

"The gift of the law excels all other gifts, its sweetness all sweetness, its joy all joys." [1]

It declares personality the substance of power also.

"The scent of flowers travels not against the wind; but the fragrance of goodness travels even against the wind. A good man pervades every place.

"The good, like snowy mountains, shine from afar: the bad, like arrrows shot by night, are not seen." [2]

The motive power of love, which depends on its sense of opportunity, is most impaired by disparagement of man's moral capacity. But Buddhism said with Plato, — Only open the eyes, the will cannot refuse to follow the light.

"The taint, worse than all others, is ignorance." [3]

Nor has any religion more clearly separated morality from ritual, or more firmly emphasized the spirit of conduct, as compared with the form.

"He who would put on the yellow robe without cleansing himself from sin, disregarding temperance and truth, is unworthy to wear it.

"Better a moment's homage to a man of wise spirit than sacrifice for a hundred years." [4]

"It is not platted hair, nor family, nor birth, that consecrates thee a Brahmana. He in whom there is truth and right-doing, he is the blessed Brahmana.

"What will platted hair profit thee, O foolish one! or the raiment of goatskins? Within thee is the abyss, while thou art making clean the outside."

[1] *Dhammap.*, vv. 1, 124, 105, 160, 166, 178, 359, 216, 81–82, 217, 354. [2] Ibid., 54, 304.
[3] Ibid., 243. [4] Ibid., 9, 106.

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"Whoso has burst all fetters and is without fear; who guiltless suffers shame and smiting in silence; from whom desire and hatred, pride and envy, have dropped; who strives not for his own gain, and who doubts not when he has seen the truth; who has risen above all bondage to the gods, whose even spirit nought can ruffle; who has come to know the way that is without death; the manly, the hero, the conqueror, the pure, the awakened, him call I indeed a Brahmana."[1]

Among the parables ascribed to Gotama in the "Lotus" is one which teaches that spiritual light is better than miracle:—

"A man blind from birth denied the existence of the world which he could not see, until miraculously cured; when he went to the opposite extreme, and boasted that he knew every thing, despising all other men as blind. Thereupon he was rebuked by wiser persons, who proved to him that with all his outward seeing he as yet knew nothing, since no outward miracle wrought on his eyes could give him power to discern truth from error, or to dissipate the greater darkness within him. Ashamed of his vanity, the man desired to know the way of life, and obtained spiritual wisdom."

Gotama, charged by a Brahman with idling away his time instead of ploughing and sowing, replied: "I do plough and sow, reaping thence fruit that is immortal."—"Where are your implements, O Gotamā!"—"My field is the law; the weeds I clear away are the cleaving to life; my plough is wisdom; the seed I sow is purity; my work, attention to the precepts; my harvest, *nirvâna*."[2]

The reader may judge from these illustrations whether it is just to call the morality of Buddhism merely negative or merely passive; and what to think of comparisons, common among Christian writers in treating this subject, of a character like the following:— Christian critics.

[1] *Dhammap., The Brahmana Chapter.* [2] *Milinda Praśna.*

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"The Christian does wrong to no one, because he loves the neighbor; the Buddhist, because he commiserates the man. True morality seeks to create somewhat; but Buddhistic morality is mere renunciation and inaction: its virtue is in leaving undone."[1] "Vice had no intrinsic hideousness, and virtue was but another name for calculating prudence; while love was little more than animal sympathy. The Buddhist could only say, 'I must:' he could not say, 'I ought.'" (!)[2]

So St. Hilaire knows no end of charges against this faith of three hundred millions of souls. It is "skepticism, nihilism, atheism, materialism, fatalism; unbelief in the good in man, in the world; without notion of duty, or distinction of man from vilest matter."[3] Yet he is constrained to add, after all, concerning it: "By the way of pain, as by every other, man may arrive at God. The way is more grievous for our weakness, but it is no less sure."[4] How much wiser this word than those sweeping condemnations, without insight, sympathy, or faith!

Buddhism, on its side, may have something to say in regard to the morality of Christian and Jewish theology. And the conversations of the "Modern Buddhist," before referred to, with Dr. Gutzlaff and other missionaries, afford a good idea of the impression made by much of it on his simple rationalism.

"How," asks this modern Buddhist, "can we assent to the doctrine that a man can be received into heaven while his nature is yet full of impurity, by virtue of sprinkling his head with water, or cutting off by cir-

[1] Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth.*, II. 576–7.
[2] Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters*, I. 239.
[3] *Du Bouddhisme* (Paris, 1855).
[4] *Du Bouddhisme*, p. 236.

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cumcision a small piece of his skin? I do not see that any one who is baptized nowadays is free from the 'curse of Adam,' or escapes toil and grief, and sickness and death, more than those who are not baptized. So far as I see, the unconverted flourish; but the converted are continually in debt and bondage. They continually pray to God; but it seems nothing happens according to their prayer." He combats eternal damnation on the ground that "there is no being who has not done something good; and that it would be to deny to good works the same power of producing fruit that is ascribed to evil works."

"How," he asks further, "can we believe that God made this inconceivable multitude of immense stars in one day, yet required five days to make this little world, this mere drop in the great ocean?" "And why does your scriptural account of the creation differ from the teaching of philosophers who show that the world is a revolving globe?"

"The Lord Buddha taught, saying: 'All you who are in doubt whether there be a future life had better believe there is one.'

"'Do not believe merely because you have heard, but, when of your own conscience you know a thing to be evil, abstain from it. Do not believe because the written statement of some old sage is produced: nor, in what you have fancied, think that because an idea is extraordinary it must have been implanted by a divine being. You must know of yourselves.'"[1]

Proselytism.

The proselyting energy of Buddhism is sufficient evidence that its moral ideal was far from being a merely passive one. Unquestionably its purpose was the taming of wild races by gentleness and endurance, and the deliverance of the masses in India from a social tyranny which violent resistance

[1] *Mod. Buddhist*, in *The Wheel of the Law.*

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would have only made more cruel. In these respects, certainly, its passive qualities were not without their uses. All religions depend in large measure for their special elements on local and temporary circumstances. One of these conditions determinative of the tone of Buddhism deserves special study.

Its love, we must remember, has a vast background of pain. Pity was the inspiration of these early philanthropists. Buddha is filled with pity for the multitudes sunk in perplexity and pain; and it is this feeling of compassion which conquers his own fears, and even decides him to accept his mission.[1] That "helpfulness towards the neighbor, hospitality to the stranger, reverence before age, gentleness towards servants, forbearance towards conquered enemies," which made the burden of his teaching, flowed from a keen sense of the wants and miseries of human destiny. Hence the stress laid on kindness as due to the fallen and weak. "Of the whole two hundred and fifty virtuous deeds, the highest is to spare a living being."[2] Hence the legends of Gotama, as well as the Buddhist fable-books, which push this perception of the possibilities of suffering so far as to make light of all actual forms of it in one's own person. Their Oriental extravagance is not without a symbolic basis of dignity, absurd as it may look to us. Thus he is related to have met a tigress, too weak with hunger to attack him: whereat he tore off his own skin, and suffered her to lick the blood from it, and then put himself into her claws to be torn in pieces.

Inspiration of pity.

"When a good man is reproached, he is to think within himself: 'These are certainly good people since they do not beat me.' If

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 33. [2] Wuttke, II. 581.

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they begin to beat him with fists, he will say, 'They are mild and good, because they do not beat me with clubs.' If they proceed to this, he says, 'They are excellent, for they do not strike me dead.' If they kill him, he dies saying, 'How good they are in freeing me from this miserable body!'"

Certainly persecution was wasted on resistance like this. "The Cynic," says Epictetus, also no sentimentalist, "must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all."

The nobility of love.

We can easily pardon excesses in the mythologic play of this instinct of forgiveness, when we find that the spirit of love is really the one creative force of Buddhist literature. The legends of Buddha, in all their extravagance, are filled with a certain divine innocence, and a childlike love that seems to have no conception of any limit to its own power. We can afford to let childish fancy run its wild way, for the sake of the many refreshing stories of Buddha's mildness towards his enemies; overcoming evil with good, and reconciling hostile armies and divided friends.[1]

"When surrounded by all his retinue of followers, and glorified by the whole world, he never thought, 'These privileges are mine;' but did good, just as the shower brings gladness, yet reflects not on its work."[2]

What delicacy of sentiment is in these proverbs, ascribed to him!—

"The true sage dwells on earth as the bee that gathers sweetness with his mouth and wings, without harming the color and perfume of the flower."[3]

"The swans [wild fowl?] go on the path of the sun: they go through the ether, by their miraculous power [instinct]. So are the

[1] Hardy, *passim*. [2] Ibid., 374. [3] *Dhammapada*, 49.

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wise led out of this world, when they have conquered Mâra (the tempter) and his train." [1]

"The heart of love and faith accompanying good actions spreads a beneficent shade through all the worlds." [2]

Fahian relates that Buddha, fleeing his Brahmanical enemies, met a poor Brahman asking alms. Having nothing to give, he had himself bound and delivered over to his enemies, that his ransom might serve as alms for this member of a class who were persecutors of his faith. The Burmese relate that, hearing all living beings singing his praises, Gotama called Ânanda, and said: "All this is unworthy of me: no such vain homage can accomplish the commands of the law. They who *do* righteously pay me most honor, and please me most." [3]

The endless process of love.

Passing into his *nirvâna*, this Master leaves his disciples assurance that there is a divinity in man that for ever works for universal and remedial ends. "When I am gone, O Ânanda! you must not think there is no Buddha. For my words shall be your Buddha."

He has uttered his song of triumph over the senses: —

"Painful are repeated transmigrations;
But now have I beheld the architect.
Thou shalt not build me another house:
Thy rafters are broken, thy roof-timbers scattered.
My mind is detached from all.
I have attained the extinction of desire." [4]

His accumulated merits, the *karma*, or embodied powers of his past moral attainments, flow forth, as

[1] *Dhamm.*, 175. [2] *Buddhagosha's Parables*, p. 16. [3] *Bigandet*, p. 299.
[4] Hardy's *Manual*, p. 180. "The architect" here is simply a poetic expression for the causes of successive births. Müller's *Dhammap.*, p. ciii.

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if set free from private limits, into the worlds, and renew all living creatures.

He passes away, and there is no return in the flesh.

> "Freed from illusions of joy and of pain,
> He comes not and goes not, He comes not again."

But not for that reason is the eternal law of release by love to fail. "Its substance exists for ever without change." Nirvâna cannot touch this essentially human and inevitable force. The process is repeated, after his assumption of it, as it had been again and again before his day. "One lamp is extinguished," say the Chinese Buddhists, "but the light is not put out; for the flame is imparted to another." Men press by myriads towards the goal of power, to the verge of Buddhahood, with like stress of redeeming sacrifice.[1] "Genuine Buddhism has no priesthood: the saint despises the priest, and scorns the aid of mediators."[2] Another and another Buddha comes, with the old blessing and promise. It is the prolific virtue of human nature that is here affirmed, the endless harvest of the heart. The millions of incomparable Buddhas are the throbs of its eternal love. So it was that the East conceived this love; and men rejoiced in it, dreamed of it, lived, toiled, and died, by faith in it.

Finally, incarnation itself, in the Buddhist system, is conceived as moral incentive, not as theological dogma. Gotama, like all the Buddhas before him, is originally a man. And in violation of all theories of mere outward fatalism, having attained deity, he *chooses* to throw himself anew into the chain of causes and effects, for the deliverance

Incarnation moral and free.

[1] See Wilson's *Essays on Religion of the Hindus*, II. 361. [2] Hodgson.

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of mankind from pain. Love here pronounces itself lord of Fate. Buddha assumes human suffering and death with moral freedom, and from inward spiritual energy. The *Man becomes God again*, through self-devoting will. And this is not regarded as miraculous nor exceptional; but as natural power and law of life, since all other men may do the same.[1]

"There is no difference between the true saints and Buddha himself. All are Buddhas."[2]

The coming good.

Nor is this faith without its forward look. *One* future Buddha is already foreknown, and all the sects have honored this hope of the ages. After five thousand years, Gotama will be followed by Mâitreya, the Compassionate One,[3] who will restore all that is lost in these sad deeps of illusion and vanity, and rehabilitate virtue and bliss.[4] Fahian found Mâitreya honored in India in the fourth century of our era; and Hiouen Tshang's prayer was that he might dwell in this redeemer's bosom, and love and serve him for ever.[5]

Compensation.

In fine, where we had been led to expect suppression of all moral energy, we find a heroic spirit of universal love. Must we not recognize that one and the same law of providential education covers all races and religions, when we see the crushing moral discouragements that are so commonly believed inherent in the Buddhist doctrines of fate and of merit thus counteracted and compensated, and the nobler powers saved?

As in previous reactions against the priesthood,

[1] Wuttke, II. 567.
[2] Hodgson, *Sketch of Buddhism* (*Transact. R. A. S.*, II. 243).
[3] Compare Persian *Mitra* (mercy). [4] Koeppen, I. 327. [5] St. Hilaire, p. 293.

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recorded in the Brâhmanas, the protestants had belonged to the Kshattriya race,[1] so Gotama also was a prince. We should infer from the earlier Sutras that he did not undertake the definite abolition of caste, which indeed does not seem to have been strictly organized in Magadha, where his preaching first found success.[2] But he ignored it in the choice of a wife and of disciples: he rejected its principle in the whole substance of his gospel; and the first compiler of his precepts, Upâli, was a Śudra. Caste, for Gotama, could have no meaning. It was simply not worth his recognition: it faded before the common destiny, the common need, the common hope. He aimed at no political revolution. His very philosophy was rooted, like the mystical banyan, in the natural soil of Hindu thought.[3] It developed this so as to show that the only solution of its dark and deep riddles was in love and labor. His protest proved that the severest social constraints must bring reaction to liberty and brotherhood in some form; that the brain cannot be kept from asserting its need of the heart. Thus, although a natural result of Hindu intellect, Buddha's gospel struck at all aristocratic foundations in Hindu society. So far as the latter had become organized in the form we find in Manu, it must have been speedily shorn, in large measure, of many despotic elements, by the immense energy of this levelling and humanizing force; and the state of India, as described by later authorities, Greek and Chinese, affords striking evidence of the fact. This thorough democracy fully rejected the theoretic basis on which castes were founded, and substituted others, which could allow them at best only a temporary

Relation to Hindu life.

[1] Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 80. [2] Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 250. [3] Ibid., pp. 248–250.

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authority. They were declared to have grown up accidentally, or else by free suffrage, setting individuals to special functions for the common good; all men being originally of one race, "all brahmas," and equally pure, — Śudras, for instance, being simply persons who chose to live by the chase, — and the later subordinations having no warrant in divine or human law.[1] They were also closely associated with a supposed fall of man from primal purity.[2] From the very beginning of Buddhism, the Śudra had equal honor, as a convert, with the Kshattriya or Brahman. All that the pride of thought had hoarded should go to the most despised. The more heavily an exclusive tradition presses, the more radical will be the remedy. The whole Brahmanical system was put to the test of practical service. Buddhism, as we have said, made democratic application of every product of Hindu thought.[3] It insisted that this demand of mankind and the age should be heard, and that the dead Veda should bury its dead. Buddha, musing in the shadow of his fig-tree, under vow "not to rise till he had found the way to end the misery of the world," learned that more was to be done than muse.

The celestial dream of strife subdued and hatred abolished, and the joyless return of the "bonds of action" brought to an end, and pain and death conquered for ever, should not come to a few dreamers, reposing under the banyans till moss grew over them, but was also for the miserable Śudras and Chandâla outcasts, who, hopeless of any release from their social destiny, came to gaze in awe at these absorbed saints and bring them fruits and herbs. So he arose, and

[1] See *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. vi. p. 361. Hardy, *Manual*, ch. iii.
[2] Wuttke, II. 534. [3] Lassen, II. 440.

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went out to preach his "mercy to all;"[1] and bade all idle saints get up and come out of their ascetic seclusion, and do likewise. What a tocsin to ring in the old slumbering woods of India! The idle saints got up in dismay and came out, but it was for the most part, if the Buddhist Sutras and traditions report truly, not to preach a gospel, but to silence the bold reformer, by force of words, if not of arms. Doubtless there was effort, as there always is under such temptation for the functionaries of an old religious system, to excite the ignorant and fanatical against him, and to cast him forth, root and branch. And yet we must beware of ascribing too much of the spirit of violence and persecution to the Brahmanical priesthood. It would appear that, on the whole, the revolution was peaceful; its progress was extremely rapid, as if the soil favored it; in a few centuries it had mastered most of the Hindu states; and more than a thousand years elapse from the time of Buddha, before the persecution arises which expels his followers from India.

Brahmanical sympathies.

In truth this radicalism was a powerful appeal to all that was earnest and real in the old belief itself, and naturally found a deep response. All the Buddhist books significantly record that Brahmâ himself sustained and encouraged Gotama when oppressed by the magnitude of the work before him, and urged him to open the door of *nirvâna* to the people of Magadha, who were benighted and despondent, expecting all things to go to ruin and nature itself to fail.[2] The new interpretation schooled the Brahman in principles which he had been affirming without com-

[1] Burnouf, p. 198.

[2] Feer in *Journ. Asiat.* (1866), p. 95; Bigandet, p. 105; *Lalitav.*, &c.

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prehending them. The root of *his own* religion was in this democratic Buddha, after all; for eternal truths belong to human nature and must go to the people, and pantheism knows no essential distinction of souls. The brave preacher plainly convicted the Brahmanical fraternity of abusing their own doctrine: perhaps he reproved their leaders for hypocrisy and charlatanry,[1] with salutary effect upon the single-minded. He was a better Hindu than the best of them; for he saw that the principle of all Hindu philosophy — "knowing truth is in becoming it" — forbade monopoly, and honored mind everywhere. He was a better Aryan than the best of them; for he understood that right of mind to test the traditional gods which was hinted so simply when the Vedic herdsman called on Indra and Agni, in the olden time, to come down and sit beside him on the sacrificial grass.

Protest against authority.

The hardest saying for functionaries of the Veda and of caste to accept, was doubtless his warning that the world did not want their exclusive mediation with eternal truth. Yet this also had been heard from Kapila and others, and rationalism has always found an echo in Hindu society. Buddha was clear and unmistakable on such points. "The Vedas," he must have said, "are no absolute authority for me; my truth is of my own experience; the old rishis cannot enlighten me much about my duties to this living, suffering world. I have probed their dogmas and disciplines, and find them inadequate. To *every* soul, not to the 'twice-born' only, its own burden; and through its own wisdom and virtue, its release.[2] Your laws forbid the people to read the Vedas; but better than all that books can teach is it to see that there is no

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 43.

[2] *Dhammapada*, vv. 165, 169, 380.

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distinction of persons in the sorrow that besets human life; and this misery both you, and those you bar out from sacred things, must be taught to dispel. Come all who will, the saving truth is free. Your Brahmanical hermitages are not the best asylums: the truth that delivers men from evil, that is the best asylum.[1] Gather others to hear of the way to liberation; gather them into schools, fraternities, monasteries; gather them in the city and the country: let every soul be fed. Your fastings, sacrifices, repetitions of sacred texts, will not open your eyes nor loose your bonds: they are vain without love. Your animal sacrifices are against your own theory of mercy to all creatures, and the sacredness of the One Life in all life. You rank by caste: I proclaim the natural order, the oldest and best first. You are seeking your own deliverance: I demand the deliverance of mankind."

Burnouf has translated an old Pâli-Sutra, in which the reformer condemns the habits of luxury and the superstitious divinations for gain into which the Brahmanic priesthood had fallen, as well as the passion for the theatre and for games of chance; a very Puritan reaction it would seem.[2] His protest against intemperance and sensuality was uncompromising.

Such the substance of Buddha's criticism, according to the oldest Sutras, which go back, *in written form*, no further than to the time of king Aśoka, 250 B.C; but which were then, according to universal tradition, formed out of earlier materials by the Buddhist teachers, and unquestionably represent the purport of the teacher's gospel.[3]

[1] Burnouf, 186. [2] *Lotus*, p. 464.

[3] See Koeppen, I. 184; Weber, *Vorles.*, 253; Lassen, II. 8; Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, 260–301.

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If this aroused opposition, it must also have stirred much profound sympathy in the best of the Brahmanical schools. But that so searching a reform could have found foothold at once, and marched on to the ascendency it seems to have won within a few centuries in the greater part of India, is proof that *Brahmanical ecclesiasticism in no wise shaped the deeper currents of Hindu feeling and life*. The scope of its work can hardly be better given than in the language of Koeppen, to whose admirable volumes all future research on the subject must be incalculably indebted: —

"It put spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood; personal merit in place of distinctions of birth; human intelligence in place of authoritative Vedas; the self-perfected sage in place of the gods of the old theology; morality in place of ritualism; a popular doctrine of righteousness in place of scholasticism; a monastic rule in place of isolated anchoret life; and a cosmopolitan spirit in place of the old national exclusiveness."

Signs of peaceful discussion.

That the strife of ecclesiastical Brahmanism against Buddhist reform must have been the main fact of Hindu history after the sixth century B.C. would seem to be obvious. Yet there is no positive record of its being stained with bloodshed; and what little we do know of the far-away thousand years of Buddhist history in India but confirms our faith that these preachers of peace and love knew how to master the world by fulfilling their own precepts; while, on the other hand, if the Brahmanical party appealed to violence to put down the heretical sect, they have destroyed all evidences of the fact. The Greek writers, who are our main authorities for the state of Indian society from the time of Alexander

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down to the Christian era, give no hint of strife between the two forms of faith.

Their descriptions of the religious caste, or class, apply to the Buddhists as fairly as to the Brahmans; in some respects, even better. Arrian, for instance, reports that it was open to all who chose to enter it;[1] which would lead us to suppose that Brahmanical exclusiveness had quite given way to Buddhistic liberty. Nearchus, a companion of Alexander, relates that women took part in the philosophical discussions of the Brahmans; and this fact again would seem to bring the two religions upon common ground. Strabo simply speaks of the *Pramnæ*, a "disputatious [rationalistic]" sect opposed to the Brahmans.[2] Clement of Alexandria, in the second century, describes both by name, but, again, without intimation of hostility between them.[3] Coming down to the fifth century after Christ, we have the testimony of the "Chinese Pilgrim," Fahian,[4] followed by that of Hiouen Thsang in the

[1] *Hist. Ind.*, XII.

[2] *De Situ Orbis*, XV. *Prâmânam* is logical proof, as opposed to revelation.

[3] *Stromata*, I. c. xv.

[4] Three Chinese Buddhists, Fahian, Soungyun, and Hiouen Thsang, traversed India at intervals of about one hundred years; and the information they afford us of the religious condition of that country from the fifth to the seventh century is of the highest value. The destruction of Buddhist works in the Chinese civil wars led to the mission of Fahian, which lasted fifteen years, and covered thirty kingdoms (including a visit to Ceylon), all of which he describes with great simplicity and fidelity, especially whatever was consecrated by Buddhist tradition. His great work, the *Fokoueki*, is of the highest reputation in China; and the pious zeal that sustained him through great and continual perils places him beside the most devoted apostles of other faiths. His wonderful record has been brought before the western world by the labors of Rémusat, Landresse, and Beal, and is of inestimable value as a source of light on the progress of Buddhism, and as an epoch in Hindu history otherwise wholly in the dark. Of equal importance is the pilgrimage of *Hiouen Thsang*, whom similar Buddhistic needs in China sent forth in like manner, to the holy places of his faith, to obtain its sacred books and learn its fortunes. The result was a more detailed, as well as a more extended, description than Fahian's; comprehending the whole of India, covering nearly twenty years of time (A.C. 630–650), and more than a hundred distinct states, of which he sought to give a full account, geographical, social, political, historical, and religious. His zeal in collecting sacred writings was prodigious. He is said to have returned to China with no less than six hundred books, translations of which were carefully made

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seventh; between which two epochs Brahmanism seems to have been gradually advancing, though in no wise gaining the day over Buddhism. But Fahian does not speak of any thing like open collision between these religions. He finds the worship of Buddha everywhere flourishing; nearly all the kings of northern India honoring his priests, whose temples were magnificent, and whose numbers were, as Soungyun afterwards describes them, like "the gathering of clouds." The Brahmans were "heretics," but, except in Java, not, as a whole, offering serious resistance to the true faith. He even mentions the adoration of Buddha by Brahmans of "great wisdom and purity," in the old time, and ascribes to them zeal in the preservation of his relics; nowhere speaking of their heresy with bitterness or hatred. Soungyun did not hesitate to go to the Brahmans to obtain charms for the relief of his mind. And, in Hiouen Thsang's time, the two religions were side by side in all northern India, that of Gotama greatly in the ascendent. Still no report is given of any thing like physical strife; though the zealous apostle, upheld by Buddhist kings, found plenty of opponents, and gained great glory in refuting them. These opponents were in fact for the most part not Brahmans at all, but Buddhists like himself, though of a different school. And it is on their heresy

and preserved by imperial command. No reader of his life and labors can withhold admiration of the singleness and purity of their purpose, however clouded by superstition, and the beauty of the spirit in which he investigates the beliefs of others. He was as familiar with the writings of the Brahmans as with those of his own faith, and as carefully collected them for the enlightenment of his countrymen. St. Hilaire calls him one of the "elect souls in history, few of whom have been able to carry disinterestedness so far towards that limit where nothing is known but the pure idea of goodness." The substance of his record has recently been translated by Stanislas Julien. These "Chinese Pilgrims" must hereafter be the main authorities, as regards both mythology and history, for the period just preceding the revival of Brahmanism and the expulsion of the Buddhists from India.

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that he lays most emphasis, apparently holding the Brahmans as of smaller account.

But the most noticeable feature of the relations of these different faiths in the time of Hiouen Thsang is the absolute toleration and even mutual respect with which their controversies were conducted. They were in no sense a war of passions, but a sober and peaceful discussion, and bear the marks of an enlightened love of free inquiry and faith in its results. A "king of kings," we are told, assembles the rulers who paid him tribute, and representatives of all the different religions in his dominions, together with the orphans and the poor, upon a "Great Field of Alms." There he celebrates a high festival, at which vast treasures were distributed, according to Buddhist custom, among the needy. First the various forms of worship were solemnly inaugurated in due order, by their respective disciples, on successive days, with equal respect from all. Next came distribution of gifts to the poor of each, in proportion to their numbers,—to the Buddhists, the Brahmans, the heretics, the mendicants of far countries. This prodigal charity is described as lasting for weeks; its care for the most indigent and friendless classes, alone, occupying a full month. The same monarch, Śiladitya, holds a grand religious conference at which two thousand Brahmans are present, and free opportunity is given to all advocates. At this the ardent Hiouen Thsang himself presides, is protected against personal enemies by the determination of the king to see fair play, and makes many converts to his own belief. The Brahmans, however, do not seem to have entered the lists, to any great extent, in these controversies. Their religion, we should infer from Hiouen Thsang, had but little hold on the people;

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and Buddhism was still in the full confidence of a fixed supremacy, which its principles forbade it to use in a spirit of persecution. This real mastery of the Hindu mind it had maintained, according to these excellent Chinese apostles, for the whole ten or twelve centuries since the ascension of Buddha into *nirvâna*. And, during all this period, we have, in fact, no record of hostile relations with Brahmanism. Yet within a very short period of Hiouen Thsang's mission, certainly not more than two or three centuries, Buddhism, as a distinctive faith, appears to have been expelled from India, and its followers dispersed into such other lands as had proved accessible to their principles.[1] How far this was owing to a revival of Brahmanism in the ninth century by its great leader, Śankara Âchârya, and how far to differences between Buddhism and other sects like the Jainas, into whom its free spirit had passed, is not easy to determine. But it is a singular phenomenon, in view of our Chinese account of the firm position of the faith but a few centuries before, and of the peaceful hold it had maintained from the beginning.

Doubtful inferences.

This remarkable record of an almost undisputed ascendency has led to the inference that Buddhism was in fact the older religion of the two; and that the strict Brahmanical church is but of recent growth, originating mainly in the movement of Sankara Âchârya.[2] There are evidences that caste at least did not stand organized on strict Brahmanical principles during many centuries subsequent to Buddha. Thus Arrian's account of the classes does not at all correspond with these principles. Fahian describes

[1] Lassen, IV. 708.

[2] Sykes, *R. A. Journal*, vol. vi. Wilson; *Introd. to Vishnu Purâna.*

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the four classes[1] in Ceylon as gathering to hear the law of Buddha three times a month. He found countries whose kings were Śudras. The oldest inscriptions in India are Buddhist, and the oldest coins too are marked with Buddhist symbols. Prinsep satisfied himself that the earliest monarchs of India are not associated with Brahmanical creeds or dynasties. Finally, to justify the inference that Brahmanism was of late origin, the Laws of Manu have been, though on insufficient evidence, brought down to a recent date, or, perhaps more correctly, referred to a small tract of country inhabited by an isolated body of priests.

Results.

Although this reasoning would seem to carry us too far, it must at least be allowed that Buddhistic liberty is traceable far back in Hindu history, beyond the era of Buddha; though not distinctly visible as a *special* religious movement till after Brahmanical ideas and even institutions had been developed out of the study of the Vedas in the hands of a priesthood. As for the four castes of the orthodox system, we have seen that it is doubtful if they *ever* had positive and permanent reality as a social organization, in the strict form in which they stand in the ancient codes; and that from the beginning they were subject to continual interference and modification from impulses of freedom and humanity.

Buddha and Brahman.

It is to be observed also that the word "Buddha" must be as old as "Brahman." Both are primeval, and grew up together, I am inclined to believe, as expressions respectively for the *rational*, or human side of religion, and for the *supernal*, or divine. The one stands for knowledge, the other for prayer. Both these tendencies of course entered into the

[1] Beal (*Translation*, p. 155) supposes that classes of *believers* are here meant.

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substance of the faith which preceded Gotama; and, at whatever special epochs the one or the other may have ripened into a definite system, the elements of the two great religions of India are united by mutual interaction at every step in the history of the national mind.

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IV.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

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THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

THE name "Buddha" is derived from the root *budh*, to know, and means "enlightened," "wakened out of dreams into certainty." Its wide currency, both in history and mythology,[1] indicates great energy of spiritual reaction amidst the inertia of Oriental faith. It was the name for *mind* in all Hindu philosophy, and the title of honor given to the sage. In the Brahmanical as well as the Buddhistic writings, this is a common term for sainthood.[2] "The Buddha," like "the Christ," is thus not a personal name, but an official title; yet conveying a less exclusive sense than the latter word has received from Christendom, being applied to innumerable ideal personages, a series reaching through incalculable time.

Name and date.

This latitude in the use of the name is one cause of the differences among Buddhists themselves, as to the epoch of the special Buddha to whom the Hindu religious reformation is referred. The Thibetans have as many as fourteen accounts of the time of his death, ranging between 2422 B.C. and 546 B.C. The Chinese and Japanese insist on the tenth century, and the Singhalese on the sixth. This last date (543 B.C.) substantiated by an agreement among the southern

[1] Pococke, *India in Greece.*

[2] Weber, *Vorles.*, pp. 27, 161.

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Buddhists, has been generally accepted by European scholars as approximately correct.[1] Yet Müller and Lassen have shown that dogmatic requirements, reputed prophecies, and other errors, have had much to do with fixing the recognized dates, after all.

Written records.

His Sutras (sentences or discourses) were collected after his death by the earliest synod of his followers.[2] But these have been to an extent recast by somewhat later hands, and Müller believes that the story of Buddhism down to its *political* triumph, in the third century B.C., was supplied out of the heads of its disciples in that epoch, rather than from authentic records.[3] Yet, in common with other scholars, he regards the substance of the oldest Sutras as good material for history, accepting the main features of their report of Gotama, notwithstanding Professor Wilson's skepticism even as to his existence.[4] St. Hilaire, following the Lalitavistâra, one of the earliest works of the canon,[5] for the period of his youth, and combining various Sutras with the reports of the "Chinese Pilgrims" for that of his ministry, has endeavored to separate truth from fiction, and to present a life of the reformer free from mythological additions, — just as Baur, Renan, Schenkel, and others, have sought to eliminate similar tributes of the religious imagination from the records of the life of Jesus. It is manifest, however, that there are even greater difficulties in the way of this effort than in that of extracting pure history from the Christian gospels.

[1] *Lassen*, II. 57-60; St. Hilaire; Burnouf; Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 251. Müller says 477 B.C. See *Sansk. Lit.*, pp. 260–301.

[2] Koeppen, II. 10; Lassen, II. 8. [3] *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 260.

[4] *Sansk. Lit.*, 79, 82; *Chips*, I. 217, 219.

[5] Dating beyond all question earlier than the Christian era (St. Hil., *Introd.*, xiv.; Müller, *Chips*, I. 205), and translated out of Sanskrit into Chinese in the first century of our era.

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Writing.

Of the use of writing for religious purposes in the earliest ages of Buddhism, we have no evidence. The traditions of the first three councils do not mention it, and the monumental edicts of Aśoka, which belong to the third century B.C., are the oldest inscriptions as yet found in India. "The *Tripitaka*, or Three Baskets" (the Buddhist Gospels) — comprising *Sutras* (discourses), *Vinaya* (discipline), and *Abhidharma* (metaphysics) — current in the Pâli language in Ceylon, contains much of the oral tradition of the oldest times; but it cannot be referred as a whole to a period previous to the time of Aśoka. Of more marked originality is the Nepâlese collection, written in Sanskrit, and in corresponding though not identical divisions. Much of this also shows signs of elaboration, only possible in an advanced stage of monastic life.[1] The Pâli history of Ceylon refers the Tripitaka to the close of the "period of inspiration" (106–74, B.C.). The Dhammapada bears stronger marks of originality, and its sentences are evidently collected from primitive sources. They answer to the *logia*, which Matthew is reported in early Christian traditions to have preserved, and which, so far as they are discoverable in the gospel now bearing his name, must form our earliest data for the life of Jesus.

That other enlightened persons received the venerated name of "Buddha" in earlier times, and in regions north of India, is very probable. The theory of Buddhism affirms an "apostolic succession," descending from remotest ages; and Gotama himself is quoted in proof of it. The name *Tathâgata* con-

[1] Burnouf, p. 125; Wassiljew, *Le Bouddhisme*, p. 19; Pillon, in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1868, p. 378–382; Müller, *Chips*, I. 196; *Sanks. Lit.*, p. 520; Feer in *Journal Asiatique* for 1867 and 1870.

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stantly given him signifies "he who has pursued the path of his predecessors." Fahian reports three earlier Buddhas, describes a tower in Oude, where the relics of one of them were preserved, and even quotes heretics who rejected Gotama in the name of these earlier saints. He was supposed to have chosen the special scene of his labors in accordance with a proverb that "a Buddha must always be turning the wheel of the law at Benarés."[1]

Whatever becomes of the claims of Buddhism to an ancient "apostolic succession," there can be no doubt that the distinctive revolution in Hindu thought, we are now describing, was embodied in a real reformer; and that his moral traits, if not his words and actions, have been, on the whole, truly handed down by his earliest disciples, whose testimonies on this point substantially agree.[2]

Personal traditions.

They report him a prince of the royal race of the Śâkyas, and the great solar race of the Gotamas; — a truly "Messianic" origin. He is born at Kapilavastu, a city of Magadha, the centre of heroic and sacred legend. His true name is said to have been *Siddhârta*, "the victorious;" but this is more probably a later title of honor, like Buddha, given him by disciples. At the age of thirty, oppressed by the sense of human misery from disease, old age, and death, and the transiency of all things, and absorbed by the longing to deliver mankind from these evils and the successive future births which involved their return, he abdicates all his royal rights, escapes with difficulty from his father's court, exchanges his robes

[1] Accessible authorities are, for northern Buddhism, Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, Burnouf's *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, and Foucaux's *Lalitavistâra*; and for southern, Turnour's *Mahâvanśa*.

[2] Lassen, II. 65–75; St. Hilaire, ch. 1; Duncker, II. 180.

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for the dress of a woodsman, and gives himself up to meditation. He studies at the feet of renowned Brahmans, but soon exhausts the wisdom of their Brâhmanas and Upanishads; yet consents to try the ascetic path, and pursues its disciplines for six years, attended by five Brahman disciples. But, after confounding all teachers and overcoming all temptations, he is no nearer content: the way is not found. Not so is human misery to be met, not so to be followed to its root. To waste the body does not enlighten the mind. He abandons fasting and penance, to the horror of his Brahman followers, who flee from his blooming countenance, as if it proved him possessed by an evil spirit. Refreshed by food, he reclines on a carpet of grass-blades under one of those mystical fig-trees, or *pippalas*, whose heart-shaped leaves, attached to slender stalks, and shivering in the lightest breeze, seem to have been suggestive to the Hindu of the fluctuation of all outward things; resolved never to rise again till the way of emancipation shall have become plain; and there, motionless for a day and a night, a silent, waiting mind, he receives at daybreak the illumination which makes him the "Awakened One." He is now not only "Sâkyamuni," the Hermit-prince, but a "Buddha" of salvation.

Yet he is overwhelmed at the thought of the greatness of the task before him. To teach thoughtless and ignorant multitudes that ignorance and thoughtlessness were the root of all evil; to lead their minds through the long chain-work of causes and effects, beginning with "*ignorance*," and ending in the woes of existence, — by appreciation of which they could free themselves into the path of *nirvâna*, seems impossible; and he despairs. But all nature and soul hasten to

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animate and urge forward the redeeming power for which they long. The very gods, Brahmâ and Indra, all that men have trusted in, confess their own defect, and entreat him to take courage and reveal the mighty secret of release.

His early preaching in Magadha is a failure. The Sutras tell of sixty days of doubts, temptations, exaltations, discouragements; of the celebrated doctors to whom he appealed in vain; of the outcry of heresy, and even insanity, that arose against him; of the necessity to leave his own country, where he had no honor, and "turn the wheel of the law" at the holy city of Vârânaśi (Benarès)

From this moment all is victory: all things are prepared for him. Kings greet him with honor, and provide structures for the propagation of the faith; and the people rejoice in the waters of life at last dispensed freely.

The world is renewed by this gospel revealed in the stillness of meditation, this solution of the problem of human misery by freedom, thoughtfulness, and love. We see the man who has dethroned the gods, for forty years journeying through northern India, preaching and reforming, clearing men's minds and opening their hearts and doing wonderful works; converting kings, saints, and scholars, and drawing the multitudes by the charm of his personal appearance and intercourse, his eloquence and his matchless virtues.

In his eightieth year he remembers that it is the time appointed for him to enter into *nirvâna;* predicts to his disciples that in three months he shall be taken from them; consoles their sorrow; admonishes them to fresh zeal, and bids them gather up his precepts when he is gone, and proclaim them to the whole

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world. At the appointed time and place, he dies in a holy grove, surrounded by his chosen apostles, exhorting them "to remember that all things are passing away, and to prepare themselves quickly for what is imperishable." They in turn promise that they will preach his word fearlessly, enduring to the end.[1] After the burning of his body, the strife of eight kings for his relics is appeased only by Ânanda's admonition to remember the spirit of the master, and by their distribution among the whole.

Analogies of Buddhist and Christian legend.

The legend of Gotama follows the great common track of Oriental inspiration, familiar in its general features to all students of Comparative Religion; though in his case profusely heaped with the flowers of a tropical fancy. Its resemblance to the New Testament mythology, limited of course by contrasts of style and detail growing out of the difference of race, is yet sufficient to show decisively that the elements available for the mythopœic faculty in different religions are substantially the same. We have the story[2] of the Buddha's celestial choice to enter the world for its salvation; of his strict fulfilment of all the fore-ordained conditions necessary to meet the ideal of Buddhahood, as to nationality, family, times and places of birth, and ministry; of his mother's virginity, and the descent of the divine child into her bosom, approaching her in the form of a white elephant bearing a lily, thus taking up into this nativity consecration the life of the beasts and the flowers, — and of his birth amidst joyful adoration by all divine powers and the transfiguration of nature to welcome redeeming soul; of the saint who discerns upon him the manifold marks of incarnation, and rejoices and

[1] *Lotus*, p. 165.

[2] See Burnouf, St. Hilaire, and Hardy.

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weeps by turns as he describes the long-looked-for glory he has been privileged, so far, to behold; of the perfections of his childhood; of his six years' fasting in the wilderness; of his conflicts with the spirit of evil, Mâra, who comes to test his pretensions, and dissuade him from his purpose by bribes and terrors, and even by armed hosts, whose weapons, as they rain upon the firm heart and will, are turned to flowers; of his miraculous gifts, used always for beneficent ends; of his controversies with the Brahmans, who sought in all ways to overreach, or silence, and even in some cases to destroy him; of his predictions and exhortations, relative to his own death and its consequences for mankind; of the wonders that attended the burning of his body, on earth and through all the worlds.

The seclusion of the Buddhist monasteries gave opportunity for the growth of a luxuriant mythology about his person, greatly enlarged and enriched by the wide geographical expansion of the faith, and the division of the believers into a multitude of sects. Similar influences have produced analogous results on the person of "the Christ" in the Western world, but with a difference that should be carefully noted. The growth of legend about the earthly life of Jesus has been checked by the historic sense peculiar to Western civilization, and by the circulation of a written record. The mythopœic current, thus diverted from the ground of his actual life, has poured itself, in an almost Oriental flood, in the generation of an ideal, all-pervading "Christ," or rather a forever-changing ideal of perfection; bound somehow to get itself reconciled, however, with the record of Jesus as its norm and source, and to remain so, constructing all spiritual

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symbolism to conform to this record, in order that the historical Jesus may be retained as indwelling life of his Church. To this personal ideal, thus constructed, which is put, like that of Buddha, in the place of deity, the Christian imagination ascribes all past, all actual, and all hoped-for good. The defect of the Buddhist mythology is thus of a very different character from that of the Christian; the one consisting in the absence of restraint by the laws of historical experience, and the other in arrest and custody of the spiritual sense by artificial historic limits. The value of both is in claiming, up to a certain point, spiritual and moral significance for the natural world.

And here the Buddhist ideal maintains, through all the wild, rank license of its fancy, a severe ethical purity, more surprising under such circumstances, than that which has been secured to the Christian by the far greater sobriety of Semitic and European imagination.

The analogy *in method* between the two mythologies holds, as far back as the records of either allow us to go. The pre-existing type of the Buddha life lay in the consciousness of the early Buddhist Church, just as the Messianic idea lay in that Hebrew consciousness to which we owe so much of the earliest biography of Jesus. "The Buddha must perform certain acts, visit certain places at certain times, work certain prescribed miracles;"[1] and it was but the natural tribute of faith to make his biography accord with these conditions. In all mythological construction, the soul has made good its own prophetic desire, more or less freely, by the creative word, "This was done that it might be fulfilled." First, a few general

[1] See Koeppen, I. 95; St. Hilaire, ch. ii.; Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, ch. xxii.

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typical features or moulds were supplied by the living hope of the age; then these, having found some personal centre round which they could gather, were wrought out by later demands in the desired variety and prodigality of product.[1]

To what extent the Founder of a faith himself has contributed to the *development* of the pre-existent ideal through sharing its hope, and believing himself appointed to fulfil it, is in all cases difficult to determine. The remote life of Gotama of course affords no exception to the rule.

The hour and the man.

The eighty apostles he is believed to have sent forth to preach his gospel of "mercy to all" are probably but a mythical expression of the fact that the age awaited. it. The voice of a common aspiration must have been heard in his appeal, as in all gospels that have survived in the faith of generations. Buddha represented, as did Jesus afterwards, a great demand of his time; partly by his actual personality, and still more as the centre of that idealizing process by which the demands of a religious crisis know how to create their own satisfaction out of a few ill-defined and therefore plastic materials. Before describing this demand in the instance of Buddhism, there is a word to be said about the significance of this relation between the Hour and the Man.

Significance of a great religious demand.

All the historical religions, even Mohammedanism and Christianity, run back to comparatively unhistorical ages and obscure personal relations. To say that the more this veil is re-

[1] Thus the legend associates with Buddha's life all the holy places of northern India. "He is born at Kapilavastu; reaches perfection at Magadha; turns the wheel of the Law at Vârânâsi (Benarès); and is freed from pain at Kaci."

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moved from the age of the Hindu reformer, the less of that universal element in Buddhism that makes it a religion will be found traceable to his *exclusive* influence, and the more to profound tendencies and necessities in the life of his epoch and his race,—is but to apply a universal law. The further we penetrate towards the apparent sources of any great religious movement, the more strongly the disposition to ascribe it, *as a whole*, to the personal power of the so-called "Founder," will be reproved. And this not because the initial impulses of great reformations were not really felt in the depths of elect souls, nor because personal force is of less moment than we are wont to suppose; but because the tendency of a religious veneration which lasts for ages is to overlook or depreciate the *manifold* personal forces of which a great religious transition is made up, in the *exclusive* interest of *one*. All universal results must come from universal elements, and such elements could only have been expressed in the infinite variety of characters and aims that made up the spirit of an age. History brings round this needed lesson in the democracy of the soul, at last. It will not suffer the honor due to human nature to be for ever absorbed or monopolized by a few. The progress of inquiry dissipates these illusions of distance; but it is only to substitute better knowledge of the providential laws.

Origin of Christianity.

This is illustrated in the study of the origin of Christianity. What have been loosely called mere "preparations for the coming of the Lord"[1] are found to have been grand creative instincts

[1] Even Müller occasionally expresses such partialism, which seems out of accord with his large culture and spiritual as well as philosophical insight. See *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 32; *Chips*, I. p. 373.

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in the depths of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman civilization, moving millions more or less definitely in one and the same direction, and shaping an ideal, ready to crown the head which should be conspicuous enough to attract its attention, yet obscure enough to baffle criticism, — these spiritual tendencies of the age secretly moving the teacher and his apostles, and developing his religious genius for its work. Not only are the moral and spiritual truths he was believed to have imported into the time, and even into human nature, found to have been fermenting in the society into which he was born, but that all-controlling function in opening the new moral era which has been ascribed to his personal *life* fails of historical evidence. His nobility and sweetness are seen to have followed the natural laws of human influence.[1] All the more evident becomes the divine impulse that was moving that whole wonderful age.[2]

Individual and universal claims.

Thus inevitably are exacted all dues that have been withheld from the common nature, whereof all religions and their founders are outgrowths. Yet heroism and sainthood are none the less spontaneous; nor has genius the less of individuality and original power. And this inevitable absorption of the personal centres of religious tradition into the humanity of their times, at the touch of historical inquiry, can no longer surprise us when we remember that every exclusive claim has defrauded personality itself, by setting aside that ideal value which belongs to it in *each and every* efficient human life.

[1] See, for further illustration of these points, the author's work on *The Worship of Jesus* (Boston, 1868).

[2] See Denis, *Théories et Idées Morales de l'Antiquité;* and Lecky's *European Morals.*

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Buddhism may have found foothold in some strong civil or political reaction against the authority of a priestly caste. Of this we have no account. But we know that the civil power sustained the movement, and that princes bore as important a part in propagating it as they did in the growth of the Christian Church eight hundred years, and in that of Protestantism two thousand years, afterwards. We know of Kandragupta,[1] the great Hindu chief, who expelled the Greeks from India in the third century B.C., and conquered an empire which included the whole of Aryavarta, the Holy Land of Hindu tradition, and the birthplace of Gotama himself, and founded the famous dynasty of the Mauryas with which the latter was connected by subsequent legend as Śâkyamuni; that he was of low caste, probably a Śudra, and that his accession must have given great impulse to the preaching of social equality in the name of religion. And we find in his grandson, Aśoka, the Constantine of the Buddhist church. All accounts agree in reporting some of Gotama's earliest converts to have been men of the highest rank and distinction. Kings were his champions and almoners. Hiouen Thsang saw the ruins of a hall of conference at Śravasti, which had been built for him by the king of Kosala, and tells of other structures in the midst of beautiful gardens erected for his public preaching by men of great wealth and benevolence in different parts of northern India. The secular element could indeed hardly have been attracted by the speculative principles of Buddhism, which do but follow the Brahmanical track into depths where the common mind could not easily find food. But these

Foothold of Buddhism in the age.

[1] Lassen, II. 196.

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fine-spun metaphysics were largely of later growth: they did not constitute its motive force. The practical democratic tone of its new preaching, on the other hand, must have been welcomed, both by the *masses* who saw mutual love and service substituted for priestly mediation as the path to beatitude, and by the *secular powers*, which would greet a religion so antagonistic to the rival caste. But we must not underestimate the capacity of the people to become interested even in *speculative* reforms. Müller does not hesitate to say that "in India less than in any other country would people submit to a monopoly of truth; and the same millions who were patiently bearing the yoke of a political despotism threw off the fetters of an intellectual tyranny." We have already seen that the political despotism itself was not so complete as has commonly been thought.

Roots of Buddhism in the past.

The old religious institutions had doubtless lost much of their power.[1] Brahmanism was no longer the profound faith it had been; or rather it was passing into the freer spirit of the Upanishad, an ever open "sitting" for new revelations. It had already gone through many phases, and its pantheistic spirit left it open in many directions to great freedom of speculation. Its Brâhmanas and Upanishads abound in Buddhistic terms and doctrines.[2] It is certain that the reformers held its spiritual essence in respect. There is good evidence that, as late as the time of Aśoka, Buddha was still associated with it, and regarded as in some sort its pupil. He was a sitter at the feet of Brahmans, and his earliest followers were of that class. Famous Brahman teachers are associated with him in both these ways.[3] The

[1] Lassen, II. 462. [2] Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 249. [3] Ibid.

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oldest Sutras seek to ennoble the name of Brahman. The Dhammapada, describing the true Buddhist saint says, "Him call I the true Brahmana." Our amiable Chinese pilgrims bear no malice towards believers in the older faith. Fahian praises a great Brahmanical teacher. Hiouen Thsang describes the Brahmans as "men of spotless life, who make purity the basis of their doctrine;" and has other good words for them whenever he speaks of them as a whole.[1] The Sutras represent Gotama as seeking to purify the lives of many, whose doctrine he does not assail. The Buddhists seem indeed to have used this ancient word to convey the sense of pure religion; objecting to the pretence of a technical Brahmanic priesthood to appropriate it. It has on their lips a certain ancestral sanctity, in view of which such ecclesiastical pretensions were childish: so that one cannot well avoid the belief that we are here dealing with one of those simplest and most natural terms for the inward life, which, like our own words, *God* and *Nature*, overpass special creeds, and associate the speaker with the whole religious experience of his people. Even while deposing Brahmâ himself as special deity, the Buddhist would seem to have held fast to the old significance of this root-word of religion. "Buddhism," says Max Müller, "was originally but a modification of Brahmanism, and grew slowly up to the position of a rival and opposing system."[2] The statement may easily be strengthened by the analogies of history. Christianity was, in its origin, a form of Judaism. The continuity of religious life is steadily maintained through all transitions.

[1] *Mém. des Voy. de Hiouen Thsang*, I. 76, 80.
[2] *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 262.

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There is no "supernatural" violation of this sacred sanity of growth.

But there was other soil than that of distinctive Brahmanism to quicken the new tree. We have seen that rationalistic reactions had already, before the time of Buddha, combined with the introspective tendencies of Hindu thought, as in Kapila. Buddhism inherited largely from the Sânkhya, and was, in the main, a democratic use of its speculative belief.[1] The rise of new divinities in the faith of the people, such as the worship of Krishna Vishnu,[2] and the reaction of aboriginal beliefs on the language, social habits, and religious sentiment of the Aryan conquerors, — must have weakened the hold of Brahmâ, as an *exclusive* conception of deity. The practical faith of the people has at all times exerted an influence on contemporaneous forms of philosophy; and even Hindu abstractions were not free from this social accountability.

And in Aryan character.

The most impressive fact in Indian Buddhism is a complete dethronement of the old deities in the name of (*buddhi*) human intelligence. The legend shows these elder gods kneeling around the mother of Gotama, at his birth, in homage to a Human Life that brought with it a profounder insight than their own. This secularist courage of the Buddhist lay in his ethnic descent. To hold special conceptions and names of deity in abeyance to the energies of *mind* was but a phase of that self-reliance which determines all forms of activity in Aryan races. Not only has there been in them all a *heroic* element that dared to lift itself to the level of recognized divinities; not only do all their epics delight to exalt the

[1] Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, I. 434. [2] Lassen, II. 464.

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interest of human strife by bringing in the immortals to share the perils and bear the fortunes of the day: this challenge to the Pantheon in the clash of Aryan arms was natural for bold and ardent races; the gods of the hero are ever provisional. But there was a like instinct of self-affirmation in the religious element also. It divinized the authority of truth, *as Thought;* and this, for the more *introversive* qualities of Aryan mind, would mean truth as contemplation, or devotion. And so the unsteadily seated Vedic and Brahmanical deities were amenable to a force more potent than the Kshattriya's sword. It was the very force by which they had earned their thrones. That concentration of mind on the eternal by reaction from the transient, which, as represented in them, constituted their deity, continued to hold them responsible to itself. It was an idea, a universal fact for ever seeking fresh expression and more perfect embodiment. In other words, devotion made them: an intenser devotion could unmake, could supplant them.

Dethronement of the older gods.

It is not meant by this statement that the ascetic mental disciplines themselves, which constituted the "devotion" of the Hindu saint, were themselves regarded as the highest object of worship. These subjective processes of the individual were doubtless, as profound aspirations always are, lost to the consciousness by absorption in the universal idea which they pursued. Thought *in itself*, as spiritual contemplation, was true deity, was creative essence; and the more there was of this, the more of real being and sovereignty, which all special forms of existence must obey.

The *rishi* who shall surpass one of these deities in devotion, who shall reach a completer sacrifice of im-

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perfect desires and aims, shall dispossess him of the divinity claimed for him; and this of course is purely by virtue of the divine itself, as always greater than any of its manifestations. Thus all special forms of deity were subject to the instinct of *progress*, in this pantheistic worship of contemplation, this faith in the endless productivity of devotion. The old myth of the *pitris*, or fathers, curiously illustrates what is here meant. This class of divine human beings were believed to be the sons of the gods; but placed *above* them by Brahmâ, as having proved holier than they. Thenceforward they were acknowledged as fathers by their own parents. Being more divine, they were essentially older. Does not the long procession of religions, the line of special names and forms by which man has sought to express his changing thought of deity, present the same law on a majestic scale? Ever the child takes the father's place. The newest authority stands for the root of being and of history: its very birth and parentage are held to have been its own work. Man affirms, in every fresh enlargement of his religious ideal, somewhat ancestral and primeval; because it is in *its* adequacy that the problem of existence is solved for him, and the essence of creative power revealed. So the older God gives way to the new light from Man. And deity may be said to judge its own past, as the *Idea of the Holy* advances in human consciousness.

The law of liberty.

This is the process of spiritual freedom. In different stages of development, its forms are different, its intelligence less or greater. But the soul's mastership of its homestead is constantly asserted in one or another way; whether it be (to apply a distinction that has been well drawn) through

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the illusive aim of primitive speculation to coerce the supernatural powers which an imaginative faith created, or through that "command of nature by obeying her laws which is the practical issue of modern science."[1]

Every step in religious progress is a reaffirmation of the authority of the ideal element in man, as representative of deity, to judge and reshape its conceptions of the divine. And, however partial these conceptions may be, it is through their changes that we are lifted *beyond them*, and know that the Infinite itself is objectively real.

Its inspiration of the human faculties, as the Idea of the Divine, advances in all Aryan civilizations with special freedom, boldly substituting fresh forms and names of deity for older ones, from time to time found inadequate. The speciality of the *Hindu* process is that the idea thus exercising eminent domain in worship is *contemplative*. From contemplation and its energies there was in Indian faith no appeal. Mythology and ritual were constantly destroyed and reconstructed by its breath. Ever dissatisfied with its own forms, it pressed on to abstraction more thorough and more intense; as we see not only in the difference between Brahmanical and Buddhistic speculation, but in the constant liability of the deities to be supplanted by a more perfect sainthood. Yet it must be recognized that the abstraction was thoroughly competent to creation not only of positive belief, but of moral aspiration and endeavor. These new masters of faith and heaven are held with singular strictness to the validity of moral authority. Devotees enter deity by prayer, discipline, and service; and saints alarm the

[1] *Westminster Review* on "Magic and Astrology" (January, 1864).

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gods by their virtues, as well as their penances, into sending seductions and dissuasives, such as nymphs, called the weapons of Indra, to bend them from their victorious march. Their imprecations sway the course of nature and human life.[1] In the Râmâyana, the poet does not hesitate to make the older gods contemptible through their immoralities; while Vishnu only, the later deity who had supplanted them, is exalted as the perfect moral ideal, and thereby commended to worship. The antagonism involved in this possibility of supplanting the old divinity by new human energies, and the arduousness of the test, has its representative victim in the mythologic king Trisanku, whose ambitious virtue, offending the gods, caused him to be flung back from heaven, whither he had ascended, towards the earth; but, being caught on his way by the powerful Viśvâmitra, he remained suspended in space, forming a constellation in the southern sky.

Buddhism the ultimate of Hindu contemplation.

Such being the recognized authority of the contemplative and moral ideals, to supplant their own past forms with higher ones, it was natural that a definite negative should come at last, to sweep away every claim of everlastingness in the existent objects of Hindu faith; to disparage the old divinities more than the boldest war-chiefs had done, and to give law even to Brahmâ, through a force of abstraction profounder than that which his name had signified or his perfection involved. It was natural that contemplation itself, pressing freely to its utmost limit, should find its own *nirvâna*, and be, as it were, set free of its distinctive self, into universality, both speculative and moral; so that out of the depths

[1] See the whole plot of *Śakuntalâ*, which is founded on an event of this sort. Also the story of Sunda and Upasunda in the *Mahâbhârata*.

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of philosophical pantheism, out of utmost isolation and abstraction, should arise this wonderful Buddhism, this "awakening," this "illumination" of idea and purpose, with the grand sweep of its affirmation: "All that lives and breathes shall become Buddha;" with its faith that whenever a Buddha passes into *nirvâna*, his *karma* is poured through the worlds as a fulness of living moral energies;[1] its summons to every one to master evil and make his own destiny; and its tender and earnest impulse to save all men, its world-wide gospel to the poor.

Can we wonder that a gospel whose essence lay in the experience that thought can reach its final purpose, and existence its solution, only in *service* of mankind, should have been heard so gladly by the teeming populations of the East? Sublime demonstration that the soul, even in its dreams, finds a path to universality, both in sympathy and faith.

Most naturally too, as we have seen, arose this radical *self-affirmation of the human*, through all negation towards special objects of faith. As Brahmanical piety was absorbed in the idea of God, so there seems to have always existed by the side of it, in India, some form of protest and reaction in the name of man. Its earnestness and courage are seen in such proverbs as these from the Dhammapada: — Self-affirmation of the human.

"Neither God nor Gandharva, nor Mâra (the spirit of evil), with Brahmâ combined, can make that man's victory a defeat, who has constantly ruled himself."

"Even the gods envy the thoughtful, calm, awakened ones."

"Better than lordship over all worlds is to take the first step in virtue."

[1] Bastian, *Die Weltauffassung der Buddhisten* (Berlin, 1870), p. 23.

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The Buddha is in origin purely human; yet contemplation exalts him above all gods. His human energy masters all special forms of being and power in all worlds. His personal will *chooses* to postpone his hard-earned *nirvâna*, that he may share it with all mankind; that he may teach the whole world the way to its blessedness. This is like the divine love ascribed to Jesus in Christian creeds. But between the two religions that correspond to these two ideals there is this difference. In Buddhism the moral grandeur redounds purely and unmistakably to the honor of human nature, since it has always been maintained that Gotama was essentially human.[1] Christianity, on the other hand, has *not* rested the virtue of Jesus on the natural capacity of man; however it may imply, in holding him to be the manifestation of deity, that a human form may, for once, be transfigured by special divine influx.

Earlier germs of this.

This coming of the human to positive self-assertion in Buddhism was, as I have said, in part a protest against disparaging man in the name of God. But we must not carry this explanation of it too far. We should, for instance, be quite wrong in regarding it as the extreme reaction from an absolute denial of the Human in Brahmanism to an absolute denial of the Divine. This would be to overstate both sides as forms of negation. We have already seen that Buddhism was not atheistic; and it is equally true that its claim for man was not an absolute revolution in Hindu philosophy. It was indeed adequate to give fresh direction to the thought and life of the people. It was

[1] See Hardy, *Manual*, p. 363. "To remove the doubts of all beings, to show that what he does is not by the power of *irdhi*, or miraculous gift, he receives Buddhaship as a man, born from the womb."

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a new expansive force, a stimulus to zeal and sacrifice. The soul always seeks a true balance of its activities; and so contemplative devotion enforced a demand for enthusiasm and the inspiration of work. Hence the Buddhist's appeal to the masses, his fearless rejection of the old divinities that slumbered in the bosom of caste. But there was in that older contemplative piety *itself*, it must be remembered, the germ of a profound recognition of the Human. Spiritual Pantheism, in its substantial meaning, exalts and reveres soul, *as* soul. Its logic can never quite escape a democratic, universal form. Its God in India was not this Brahman nor that rishi, but "All in all." Therefore, as we have seen, its development naturally brought rationalistic and free mystical tendencies, caste-disintegration, and, in a word, Buddhism itself, in definite, constructive form, as the concurrence of all these, notwithstanding every thing that ecclesiasticism could do to prevent them.

We must note that it was only as *special divinities* that the elder gods were liable to be supplanted by the spiritual disciplines of special saints. It was only as *a* god that Brahma was dethroned by the Buddhist test of transiency, not as God. It is not to be inferred therefore that the attitude of censorship we have described involved ignorance or rejection of an eternal essence beyond the power of human criticism to change, or of human achievement to supplant. Only the pursuit of such transcendent moral reality could have enforced the criticism of specific objects of worship, and the effort to achieve their subjection by a higher truth and virtue than their own.

Limits of this claim of the human.

It is true that the gods, thus declared to be merely temporary, were also held to be actual beings and powers in the universe: so that in the treatment of all

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such definite forms of deity as provisional there lay the danger of dissolving *objective* truth in the self-assertion of the critical faculty; and of claiming not only that man makes and unmakes his special conception of God, but that God, as God, is nothing else than a human *conception*. But these perils of negation were held in check by a profound veneration in the Oriental mind for the independence of the eternal, absolute, and infinite. It was but as forms of personal will that the gods were held to be thus provisional, and subject to the demand for more perfect fulfilment of the religious ideal.

Imperfect sense of deity.

The Buddhist has not therefore committed the weakness of holding Brahmâ or Vishnu to be true and perfect Deity, while at the same time subjecting him to human criticism and even mastership. Yet, when Buddha himself came to be the centre of religious faith and mythologic creation, he was regarded as subject to human influence and even control, with little respect for the self-adequacy of the divine. So Vishnu is described by Kàlidâsa as "greater than the self-existent," when choosing a mortal shape, to save mankind.[1] To this imperfect sense of the meaning of deity all religions are subject, in concentrating worship on a definite personal will. In the same way, the Christ practically supplants the Father in the faith and service of Christians; and God becomes only an "impalpable effluence," from the person of his own Son! It hardly becomes Christendom to rebuke Buddhism for putting a man in place of God. Luther said that God had "tied himself to man by bonds of prayer;" Montalembert, that "prayer equals, sometimes surpasses, the power of God, triumphing

[1] *Śakuntalâ*, Act. VII.

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over His will, His wrath, and even over His justice." "God," says Ruskin, "is a Being who can be reasoned with, moved by entreaties, angered by our rebellion, alienated by our coldness, pleased by our love, and glorified by our labor." All this is certainly to worship the conditional and finite. It would subject the moral order of the universe to the infirmities of human desire. It is also, on the other hand, however unconscious and perverted, a kind of claim justly entered by the human to determine the paths of freedom and progress. Both these forces manifestly involve criticism and even supersedure of what *has been* held the adequate object of worship. But they are perverted, if not suppressed, in so far as the claim amounts to a pretension of moving and changing deity itself; in so far as it is assumed that one who can be thus criticised, changed, convinced, improved, and even supplanted, has in very fact exhausted the idea of infinite, absolute Being. Such, however, is the perverted form under which the claim of the human to shape its religious ideal appears, not in the distinguished instances only that have just been given, but in the general tenor of Christian praying and preaching.

And the sincerity and devoutness, which is found to be compatible therewith in the Christian world, should prepare us to believe that a similar failing in later Buddhism is not without its aspirations to freedom and its sentiment of reverence and faith.

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V.

AFTER-LIFE IN INDIA.

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AFTER-LIFE IN INDIA.

HARDLY any thing in the history of religion is more impressive than the energy with which Buddhism was propagated for centuries after the time of Śâkyamuni, and its success in revolutionizing the religious life of the great and little states into which northern India was divided. All the oldest inscriptions on Hindu monuments are not only written in dialects of popular language, but are shown to be Buddhist by their spirit also, as well as by the emblems which in many cases are associated with them: the chaitya, or relic temple, the tree, the wheel, the cross, the seated Buddha. And the same conclusion holds of the old coins of India, so far as they have been brought to light. Fahian speaks of Buddhism as "the law of India;" and the immense treasures of sacred literature with which Hiouen Thsang returned to China prove that the resources of the faith were in his time almost unlimited. Yet the practical missionary zeal which it demanded of its converts could not be contented with the passive spirit of Hindu civilization. That restless ardor to deliver all mankind drove them to expend most of their force on distant regions. Gradually, too, after many centuries of depression, there came a revival of Brahman-

Extension of Buddhism.

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ism, of which we have no very clear explanation. Doubtless the hold it had at the earlier period in the inertia of established system was not wholly lost through the palmy days of Buddhist ascendency. Doubtless it learned to quote the radical metaphysics and thorough rationalism of its rival with disparaging effect before a people naturally reverent towards tradition, profoundly mystical, and open to recognize somewhat authoritative in an ancient title to the Vedas, those fountains of national faith. But the disappearance of Buddhism from the soil of India is a consequence not so much of this revival of Brahmanism — which has, after all, never been very effectual — as of its own absorption into numerous sects, which have transferred much of its spirit into new forms of popular faith. It is not easy to say how much of the disintegration of caste described in an earlier part of this work as going on in later times, and which is manifest in nearly all important sects of recent formation, is due to the direct influence of distinctive Buddhism. Though it has failed to *eradicate* the idea of caste-subordination from the Hindu mind, so that even in Ceylon, where its effect on manners and life has been very great, the lowest, or Chandala caste, still remains;[1] yet the separation of that idea from *religious* faith and institution has been a marked result of the forces which it set in motion.

Influence on sacrifices.

Buddhism was still more effectual in its reaction against the sacrifices of animals, which had succeeded those simple Vedic rites, so seldom stained with blood. Even the cakes, butter, and soma-juice of those early days were abjured by these thorough Puritans, who allowed no rite but the offer-

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*.

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ing of flowers to their perfected Buddhas. And even the great Brahmanical revival has not restored the animal sacrifices thus interrupted, except in rare instances, and, as some affirm, in a single province. The Hindus have, as a people, returned to the old Vedic ways, and bring their offerings from the dairy and the field.[1]

Its hold on India.

The inspiration of Buddhism was, moreover, in its practical energy, its faith in liberty and in active work; and with these the climate of India was less congenial than that of regions to the north and west. Its apostles were attracted by the rude and unsettled condition of the tribes of middle Asia, as strongly as they were repelled from Hindustan by fixed ideas and systems. Yet the influences of climate, tradition, and organization combined, failed for twelve centuries to dislodge Buddhism from the country of its birth. The special causes of its disappearance from India, in or about the ninth century, are still unknown. This epoch is the dark age of Hindu history. Its scanty traditions hint of merciless religious persecutions; but of these, if they really occurred, all definite record has been effaced.[2] Of crusades against Buddhism by teachers like Śankara and Kumârila Bhatta, and of quarrels with the kindred school of the Jainas, we have little more than vague rumors. These Dark Ages were times of intestine strife among the principalities of India. They were followed by the all-commingling flood of Mohammedan invasion; and, when the old sects and schools reappeared, it was under new names, and as results of a ferment and fusion not now to be traced. Buddhism has but been exiled in name: the substance remained, and told decisively on the theology, literature, and life of the Hindu race.

[1] See Wheeler, I. 15[illegible]

[2] Lassen, IV. 708.

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Shown in the Bhagavadgitâ.

The Bhagavadgitâ is an evidence of this influence, for the period previous to the expulsion. It is Brahmanism making such concessions to Buddhism as were necessary to save its own life; recognizing the duty of eclectic liberality, and yielding a surprising amount of moral consideration and respect to the lower castes. The Yoga system of Patanjali, probably one of the outgrowths of Buddhism, or at least a successor in the same line, had in one sense equalized men, by exalting ascetic life as such above the distinctive functions assigned by the older faith to the several castes. The Bhagavadgitâ, while it disparaged these exclusive claims of ascetic discipline, yet obeyed the democratic impulse of Buddhism in another way; emphasizing the duty of action and the demands of society on the individual. It reduced the whole mythological world to unity; and, with Buddhistic thoroughness, absorbed the whole universe of gods and men into the abyss of apparent annihilation. "As torrents rush into the ocean, so the heroes of the human race enter the flaming mouths, the fire of death."[1] Brahmâ could never have appeared under so terrible a form, — that eremite God of eternal rest. The thought of evanescence must have been deepened by some powerful educational force. The universal energy of death is even declared in plain words to be greater than Brahmâ himself.[2] And we have here, without doubt, the gigantic shadow cast upon Brahmanism by the Buddhist *Nirvâna*, as well as by the terrors of the popular theology, which were not to be wholly escaped. But when that abysmal deity changes his form, and appears at once as Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, the preserving Spirit, bidding

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid.

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Arjuna look on him "free from fear, with happy heart," — it is impossible not to recognize in this noblest *avatâra*, counselling to manly human service,[1] to absolute disinterestedness, to liberation from the Vedas, to the worship of eternal truth,[2] an effort of Brahmanism to combine with its aspirations toward an immortal life the practical love and freedom enforced by the Buddhist gospel.

"Without action you cannot reach freedom from action: whoso restrains the senses and acts unselfishly, without interest in the fruits, yet who acts, seeking the good of mankind, attains peace. His path leads to *nirvâna* in the Supreme Spirit."[3]

This is certainly as near Buddhism as Brahmanism could be expected to arrive. Krishna says further:—

"It is the mind liberated from the Vedas that reaches true contemplation. Seek refuge in thy mind."[4]

"Even Vaisyas and Śudras take the highest path, if they turn to me. How much more, then, Brahmans and Kshattriyas!"[5]

It is Arjuna, the Kshattriya king, who is promised the highest unity with deity, and admitted to visions hidden from all other men.[6] Such concessions to the lower castes, however imperfect, indicate democratic influences which the hereditary priesthood had been unable to resist.

All this is none the less true because the caste system is still maintained in the Bhagavadgitâ, the whole theory of action qualified thereby, and the duty of the warrior to his caste asserted, and emphatically urged. Nor is it the less true because the poem indicates none of that aversion to bloodshed which was characteristic of Buddhism. The other points that

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. iii. xii. [2] Ibid., ch. ii. [3] Ibid., ch. iii. ii.
[4] Ibid., ch. ii. [5] Ibid., ch. ix. [6] Ibid., ch. xi.

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have been noted amply suffice to show a profound influence proceeding from this religion, in the philosophy and ethics of an age five centuries after its birth.

In the Râmâyana.

Some have supposed that the Râmâyana originated in a Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism.[1] On this theory, Râma's war with the Râkshasas, and his triumphant invasion of Ceylon, aided by supernatural apes and bears, was a poetic version of the expulsion of the Buddhists out of southern India, by a religious crusade, assisted by aboriginal tribes of the Dekkan. The old gods of the Rig Veda, and those of the native races, as well as the traditional heroes of the warrior caste, were all brought in to effect the restoration of the older faith; all these popular religious associations being wrought up with dramatic effect in the beautiful tale of Râma's recovery of his lost Sitâ from the ravisher Râvana, which forms the second half of the epic. The proofs of such a connection, however, do not seem at all satisfactory. The harpy-like, blood-thirsty Râkshasas, especially, could hardly have been suggested by Buddhism. Yet the Râmâyana bears striking marks of the influence of this faith on the Brahmanical system. The concessions to popular mythology in which it abounds, though written in the interest of the priesthood; the recognition of older and later incarnations; the democratic spirit shown by the people's taking an active interest in affairs of state, giving advice to the king, urging their desires on his ministers, and even jeering and reproaching him; the introduction of Śudras into public ceremonies, and the pouring of water on the heads of princes at their inauguration,

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, II., *Introd.*, p. lxxvii.

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by all the castes, — show that Brahmanism had been reduced to recognizing equalities that had no place in its system; a change that must be due to Buddhism.

After this, too, we hear more about *gods of the people*.[1] They were in many respects such as might be expected from the many causes of demoralization in India during modern times; yet their *number* and their *prominence* alike indicate that the exclusiveness of Brahmanism had to give way to the demand of the popular mind for freedom. The people transformed the old deities of the Veda; and even the later ones, Brahmâ, Vishnu, Śiva, were merged in Krishna and Râma. The priesthood were obliged to elaborate the popular deities in combination with their Brahmâ into a form of trinity; and even to subordinate Brahmâ to Vishnu and Śiva. In the common mind they remained separate, and each had his sect of worshippers. Vishnu, a Vedic god, who had come to represent the bounty and serenity of nature, grew into the beneficent divinity of the Ganges population,[2] embodying in his *avatâras* the noble faith that God descends to save the world, whenever evil wins the upper hand. The worship of Vishnu-Jagannâth, "protest of the equality of men before God," — making all castes eat together, celebrating traditions of the most humane and democratic spirit, — whose very breadth has opened it to excesses by a few minor sects, which all classes condemn, — is now shown to be largely the result of Buddhism, and associated with its earliest struggles.[3]

In the popular theology.

[1] Lassen, IV. 594. [2] Duncker, II. 232.

[3] Mr. Hunter, from whose interesting work on *Orissa* these statements are drawn, speaks in the highest terms of the behavior of the pilgrims of Jagannâth, and of the influence of his worship on the customs of the people. The lines of research, so ably opened by Mr. Hunter, promise real light on the darkest periods in the history of Buddhism in India.

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The modern sects.

It is in coming down to these later times that we realize how immense a variety of tendencies is covered by the common name Hinduism, and how large and free has been the growth of this tropical religious nature. Wilson's enumeration of the principal sects alone runs up to nearly sixty.

Their free criticism.

Scarcely one of the dogmas of older schools has escaped denial. Freedom of thought and speculation has been as perfect as ever in the world.

There are *Vaishnava* sects, as well as others, that deny the absolute unity of deity, and repudiate *moksha*, or absorption into the One, carrying the Sankhyan principle of individuality to its furthest extreme;[1] others that reject asceticism, passing over to the opposite pole, and in some instances, we must add, into sensuality under religious sanctions;[2] others that hold themselves bound, in view of the dogma of incarnation, to reverence the *guru*, or spiritual guide, as not only one with God, but greater even than Krishna himself;[3] others that consider ascetics as persons who are suffering the penalties of sins committed in former lives, and deny the possibility of *avatâras*, since God can neither be subject to transmigration nor to union.[4]

There are sectaries who say jokingly, when they hear the Vedas recited, "These are sick people, in a painful fit, or hired journeymen in an uproar;" and when they see the sacred thread on the neck of a Brahman, "A cow will not be without a rope."[5] There are others who "recognize the being of God in mankind, know no being more perfect than man-

[1] Mâdhwas.
[2] Vallabhâchâryas and Sâktas.
[3] Chaitanyas, Kartâbhajas.
[4] School of Piranah (*Dabistân*, II. viii.).
[5] Chârvâks (*Dabistân*, II. ix.).

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kind, and think that it contains nothing of a bad nature."[1]

Nor is the disintegration of traditions less manifest in the sphere of sentiment than in that of dogma. In mythology.

One issue of the old democratic movement of Buddhism is to be traced in the chaos of the later mythology, which awaits some centralizing and spiritualizing power.

This very luxuriance proves the richness of the native soil. We may therefore be sure that the reconciling principle, after all this disintegration, will spring from Hindu, not foreign, associations. The total failure of distinctively Christian propagandism was to be expected. How should this rich and free symbolism be supplanted by exclusiveness in type and form? Morality, science, freedom, humanity, will speak to the Hindus in those universal aspects which belong to the age; but it must be through their own native experience. The foothold must be found in their natural associations and descent. Native spiritual resources.

This free spirit is illustrated by the *Sikhs*, or disciples, at first a religious sect, then roused by persecution into a nation of soldiers, fighting for liberty of conscience, and establishing a free state in the Panjâb, which they held for centuries, until it passed under English rule. No race in India has shown a braver or more independent spirit, in thought or in conduct, than the Sikhs. They date their history from Nanak, a native Hindu teacher of the fifteenth century, a grain factor by trade, who threw aside Vedas and Koran, denounced caste, *sati*, The Sikhs.

[1] Manushya Bhâkta (Ibid., xii.).

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and all other degrading customs and institutions, and preached pure Theism, broad humanity, and a code of morals nowhere surpassed. Renouncing the ascetic garb, he spent his life in domestic relations, and after a long ministry, in the cause of right and noble living, of large tolerance, and devout aspiration, died, like Buddha, surrounded by devoted disciples, the founder of a new religion. Rebuked for sleeping with his feet towards a temple, this teacher asked: "Whither shall I turn my feet, if I would point them where God's house is not?" Like Buddha, he is believed to have had previous lives on earth. The following story from the Dabistân[1] is thoroughly Buddhistic: —

"When Nanak died, he saw two roads, the one to heaven, the other to hell. He chose the latter, and descending thither brought all the inhabitants out. But God said, 'These sinners cannot enter heaven: you must return into the world, and liberate them. Therefore Nanak came into this world, and his followers are those former inhabitants of hell: the *guru* (teacher) comes and goes, until that multitude shall have found their salvation."

The Sikh Bible, *Âdi Granth*, compiled by Arjuna, a subsequent *guru*, in the next century, and written in a now obsolete tongue,[2] contains contributions from the teachings of twenty-five persons, of all orders and pursuits; among them a leather-dresser, a cloth-printer, a barber, a butcher, and a musician; also a woman. It teaches the unity of God, the moral laws, and liberty of thought and worship; forbids all vices, and commands the practical virtues and universal love.[3]

This Bible speaks of God as "one, sole, self-exist-

[1] *Dab.*, II. p. 269.
[2] Trumpp, in *Journal of Royal As. Soc.* for 1871, p. 198.
[3] *Asiatic Researches*, I. 292.

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ent, the meaning and the cause of all, who has seen numberless creeds and names come and go."

Nanak says:—

"The true name is the Creator, the Being without fear, without enmity, the everlasting (timeless) One, the Self-existing."

"From his beneficence comes clothing; from his merciful glance, the gate of salvation. If He be praised, heard, and revered in the heart, He will take away pain and bring comfort."

"His worshippers rejoice always: to hear him is the end of sin and pain."

"He is not found in names, readings, austerities. If I knew Him, I would speak it; but the story cannot be told. What his power, what his thought? I cannot come up to it."

"What pleases Thee, that is a good work. If the heart is defiled by sin, it is washed in the dye of God's name. They who have done a deed, themselves have set it down. They sow themselves and reap themselves."

"What word may be spoken by the mouth, which having heard He may bestow love?"

"Early reflect on the greatness of the true Name."

"Remember the truth that is from the beginning of the world,—the truth that is and will be for ever: not by meditation can truth be reached, nor by silence, though I keep up continual devotion. The wall of falsehoods is broken by walking in the commandments of God."

"They say there are four races; yet all are of the seed of Brahmâ. The four races shall be one, and all shall call on the Teacher. Think not of thy caste, but abase thyself, and be saved."

"Fight with no weapon but the word of God; use no means but a pure faith."

"Devotion is not in ragged garments, nor staff, nor ashes, nor shaven head, nor sounding horns."

"He is pure who does no evil, is intent on good, and ever giveth to the poor."

"Be true, and thou shalt be free: to be true belongs to thee; thy success, to the Creator."[1]

[1] Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*; Ludlow's *British India*, vol. i.; Trumpp, *ut supra*.

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Other Sikh *gurus* have left these sayings:—

"My mind dwells on One, who gave the body and soul."

"Many Brahmans have wearied themselves with studying the Veds, but found not the value of an oil-seed."

"With slayers of their daughters, whoever has intercourse, him I hold accursed."

"Not they are *sati* who perish in the flames, but they, O Nanak! who die of broken hearts."

"Fall at God's feet: in senseless stone God is not."

"God heard the cry of virtue, and Nanak was sent into the world: the four castes became one, the high and the low equal."

"The Sikh should set his heart on charity and purity."

"He who takes the goods of sister or daughter, who oppresses the poor, is punished. He who gives not to the needy shall not see God."

"He is of the faithful who protects the poor, combats evil, remembers God; who is wholly unfettered, who ever wages battle, who slays the Turk, and extends the faith."[1]

The last sentence is from Govinda, a warlike *guru*, "who wore two swords in his girdle, the one to avenge his father, the other to destroy the miracles of Mohammed."[2] The peaceful Nanak brought, after all, "not peace, but a sword;" and Govinda, the tenth teacher, must change the name *Sikhs* (disciples) to *Singhs* (lions), and organize his people to defend the faith. Nanak has also, like Buddha and Jesus, been transformed in the faith of his later followers from the simply philanthropic reformer into the chief of divine emanations, and the way ordained for the redemption of the world.

But Govinda was theologically free and thoroughly in earnest.

"Since he fell at God's feet, no one has appeared great in his eyes: Râm and Ruheen, Purâns and Koran, have many votaries; but neither does he regard."

[1] Cunningham; Ludlow; *ut supra*. [2] *Dabistân*, II. 273.

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"Smritis, Shastras, and Veds differ in many things: not one does he heed."

"O God! under thy power all has been done: nought is of myself."

Not less sincere and fervent is the faith of the modern Sikhs, whose religious services have been described as pervaded by a peculiar enthusiastic joy, and their prayers by a spirit of self-examination, moral discipline, and universal love.[1]

Seed in Buddhist ashes.

The strict monotheism of the Sikhs has a strongly Mohammedan tone; but their freedom of speculation and protest, as regards Hindu tradition, points plainly to that element in the national character of which Kapila and Gotama were earlier exponents. The Hindu sects of the last six centuries are marked by a democratic spirit, which may rightly be called the after-life of Buddhism in a people who had rejected its form and its name. Has this harvest sprung from the ashes of a martyred Church? Is this the meaning of that prescience of "a further shore" beyond the ocean of death?

All the important forms of Vishnu-worship[2] continue the impulse of these early reformers, who came to be themselves regarded as his incarnations. *Râmânanda*, in the fifteenth century, followed their example in renouncing caste. His disciples form the largest sect in Gangetic India.[3] The numerous followers of *Kabir* reject polytheism and the service of images, and ridicule the honors paid to pandits and Vedas. The *Jainas*, whose special relations with Buddhism have not been clearly made out, certainly combined

[1] Wilkins, *As. Res.*, I. 289.

[2] Lassen, IV. 608–616; Stevenson, *Journ. R. A. S.*, vii. pp. 64–73; Wilson's *Essays on Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i.

[3] Wilson, p. 67.

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with Sânkhya categories and formulas many Buddhistic elements; such as deliverance of the soul through pure knowledge alone, rejection of the Vedas, suppression of the Brahmanical gods, and substitution of a series of *jinas* or sages [*jina* is itself a title of Buddha], in their place.[1] Admission to their body was independent of caste.[2] Their moral code is contained in five great duties, — truth, chastity, abstinence from destroying life, honesty, mastery of desires; in four *dharmas*, or forms of good work, — liberality, gentleness, penance, and piety; and in three forms of restraint, — government of the mind, of the tongue, and of the person.[3] All these are wholly Buddhistic, and make the admitted hostility of the Jainas to technical Buddhism the more remarkable. It is perhaps simply the sign that no ecclesiastical bonds could confine these elements of moral and spiritual universality. The revival of Brahmanism itself, which seems to have represented a general movement towards more positive theism than the Buddhist affirmed, caught his democratic impulse; and Śankara, the great Vedantist leader, is said to have broken up the four original castes in Malabar into seventy-two, which was a great step towards destroying the principle itself.

Liberties of the later sects.

Lassen sums up the more favorable features of later Hindu sects under three heads. They lay greater stress on piety and morality than on outward forms of worship, and make protest against ritualism. They undermine the system of caste by admitting persons of all classes to religious communion. Their founders and teachers make use of the popular dialects, in writing and in speech.[4]

[1] Lassen, IV. 735–787.
[2] Wilson, p. 335.
[3] Wilson, pp. 317, 335.
[4] Lassen, IV. 643.

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These later schools resume the many elements which have preceded them; freely intermingling pantheistic, rationalistic, and skeptical forms of Hinduism with the monotheism of the old Mohammedans and the devout mysticism of the Sufis.

Great numbers of *maths*, or monasteries of the Vaishnava sects, are scattered over India, governed and supported very much in the same way as similar Catholic institutions in the Middle Ages. But they are open to all travellers or mendicants; and, for the members, ingress and egress are perfectly free at all times, "any thing like restraint upon personal liberty seeming never to have entered into the conception of any of the religious legislators of the Hindus." "Their tenants are most commonly of a quiet, inoffensive character; and the *mahants*, or superiors, especially, are men of talents and respectability." [1] The Vaishnavas.

The *Śaivas*, or Sivaite sects, for the most part represent more exclusive interests, being a fruit of Śankara's great Brahmanical revival in the eighth century.[2] With few exceptions, their writings are not in the popular tongue; and they avoid proselyting among the masses. In such works as the Tamil "Gnân-Pothâm"[3] all the mystical philosophy of Brahmâ-worship is transferred to Śiva, yet not without Buddhist elements to which the change of deity is, after all, not improbably due. The least exclusive sect of Śaivas is that which worships Śiva under the emblem of the *linga*, a very old cult, and, in general, by no means the immoral one it has been represented. The Śaivas.

But the Vaishnava sects have always been democratic. They have made their ideas free to the people by rejecting a specially sacred and The Vaishnavas.

[1] Wilson, p. 50–53. [2] Lassen, IV. 618. [3] See *Amer. Or. Journ.*, vol. iv.

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learned tongue, and opening the function of teacher to all persons. A large part of the literature of the Mahrattas, who have proved the manly qualities of a Hindu race, is written in vernacular Prâkrit, and almost all this portion is due to the Vaishnavas. One of these democratic poets wrote a commentary on the Bhagavadgitâ. Another was famous for his satires on caste and ceremonial forms; while a third was himself from the lowest of the outcasts, and a fourth was a slave girl. The influence of the ethical and religious teachings of these Mahratta poets on the middle and lower strata of society in central India is said to have been very important.[1]

The Bauddha-Vaishnavas believe that all castes should eat together on religious occasions. "At the temple door all the castes become one." They have a legend of Vishnu, that he brought saints from heaven, who had been low-caste laborers, and placed them at a banquet beside the Brahmans, himself sitting at the head, and even eating the particles of rice that they let fall. Another story is of a householder who made a feast in honor of his ancestors, and gave part of their portion to a poor *pariah* at his gate: whereat the Brahmans present departed from the feast in contempt; but the ancestors themselves came down to take their places, and the table was filled. — Idolatrous rites are very sternly reproved by these sects.

"There are priests who command you to cut down a living plant to crown a lifeless stone. They call every thing deity, yet cut down trees for oblation. They have girdles for their loins with jingling bells, but they are dumb in divine knowledge. Ceremonies, austerities, and holy places are trifles compared with the praise of God."

[1] Stevenson, on *Maratha Literature* in *Journ. of the Bomb. Branch of R. A. S.*, vol. i.

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One of the Vaishnava sages is represented as not only forgiving men who had robbed and maimed him, but as pleading with Vishnu to release them from the penalty, and give them a place in heaven.[1]

Kabir.

The chief disciples of Râmânanda were twelve in number, and for the most part men of the lower and most laborious castes: among them were a weaver, a currier, a barber, and a basket-maker. The most famous of all was Kabir, perhaps the most radical reformer in Hindu history; though it is possible his name, which is an appellative of respect, may be mythical, and simply representative of a great movement of democratic reaction.[2]

The Dabistân relates the following stories of Kabir: —

"Hearing some learned Brahmans, who had been praising the miraculous power of the Ganges water to wash away all sins, call for some of this water for themselves, he ran to the river, and brought back his own wooden cup filled with this sacred element, which he offered to the Brahman. But being of a caste from whose hands a Brahman cannot take either food or drink, his gift was refused, upon which he observed: 'You have just now declared that this water purifies body and soul, and makes all foulness of evil disappear; but if it cannot render pure this wooden vase, it certainly does not deserve your praises.'"

"Seeing once a gardener's wife collecting flowers for the image of a deity, he said to her: 'In the leaves of the flower lives the soul of vegetation, and the idol to whom thou offerest flowers is without feeling and dead: the vegetable is superior to the mineral. If the idol possessed a soul, it would chastise the cutter, who, when dividing its substance, placed his foot on the idol's breast. Go, and venerate a wise and perfect man, who is a manifestation of Vishnu.'"[3]

The following sentences[4] from Kabir and his

[1] These illustrations are from Stevenson, and taken from the *Bhakta Vijaya*.
[2] Wilson, pp. 55, 68.
[3] *Dabistân*, ch. II. viii.
[4] Taken from Wilson's selections in *Essays*, &c., *ut supra*, pp. 79–90.

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immediate followers will convey an idea of his teaching: —

"My word is from the beginning; it has been deposited in life; there is provided a basket for the flowers."

"He who knows what life is will seize the essence of his own: such as it is now, he will not possess it again. The travellers are hurrying on, expecting to purchase where there will be neither trade nor market."

"Man wanders astray till he finds the gateway of the word. But he who has made himself acquainted with the word has done his work."

"Live according to your knowledge: fetch water for your own drinking, nor demand it from others."

"Life (the world) sells pearls; but with him who knows not their value, what can be done?"

"The goose (man) abandons the lake, and would lodge in a water-jar! Kabir has called aloud, 'Repair to your own place, nor destroy your habitation.'"

"The dwelling of Kabir is on a mountain peak, and a narrow path leads up to it: an ant cannot put his foot on it, but a pious man may drive up an ox."

"He who sows Râma never puts forth the buds of wrath. He values not the worthless, and he knows not pleasure nor pain."

"That a drop falls in the ocean, all can perceive; but that the drop and the ocean are one, few can comprehend. You and I are of one blood; one life animates us both; from one mother is the world born: what knowledge is this that makes us separate? Kabir has said, 'I have cried aloud from friendship to mankind: from not knowing the name of Râma, the world has been swallowed up in death.'"

"Of what avail is it to shave your head, prostrate your body on the ground, or immerse your body in the stream? Whilst you shed blood, you call yourself pure, and boast of virtues you never display. Of what benefit is cleaning your mouth, counting your beads, and bowing yourself in temples, when, whilst you mutter your prayers, or journey to Mecca, deceitfulness is in your heart? The Hindu fasts every eleventh day; the Mussulman during the Ramazan. Who formed the remaining months, that you should venerate but one? If the Creator dwell in tabernacles, whose residence is the universe? Who has beheld Râma seated amongst images, or found

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him at the shrine to which the pilgrim has directed his steps? The city of Hari is to the east, that of Ali to the west; but explore *your own heart;* for there are both Rama and Karim."

"Who talks of the lies of the Veds and Tebs? Those who understand not their essence. Behold but *One in all things:* it is the second that leads you astray. Every one is of the same nature with yourself. He whose is the world, and whose are the children of Ali and Ràm, — He is my teacher."

"Poison still remains in the soil, though ambrosia be sprinkled a hundred times: man quits not his evil habits."

"If you are a true dealer, open the market of veracity: keep clean your inward man, and repel oppression afar off."

"Many there are that talk, but few that take care to be found: let him pass on without regard, who practises not what he professes."

"Check the tongue, associate with the wise, investigate the teacher's words."

"Affection is the garment in which man dresses for the dance: consign yourself, hand and foot, to him whose body and soul are truth."

"Let truth be your rate of interest, and fix it in your heart."

"A real diamond should be purchased: the mock gem is waste of capital."

"Pride of intellect is manifold: now a thief, now a liar, now a murderer; men, sages, gods, have run after it in vain. Its mansion has a hundred gates."

"When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the well."

"Yet the master is helpless when the scholar is inapt. It is blowing through a bamboo to teach wisdom to the dull."

"The tree bears not fruit for itself, nor for itself does the stream collect its waters: for the good of others only does the sage assume a bodily shape."

"I have wept for mankind, but no one has wept with me: he will join in my tears, who comprehends the word."

"Kabir cries aloud to his fellows: 'Ascend the sandal ridge; whether there be a road prepared or not, what matters it to me?'"

"All have exclaimed, 'Master, master,' but to me this doubt arises: how can they sit down with the master whom they do not know?"

It is noteworthy that while the disciple of this sect is bound to devote himself to his spiritual *guru* or

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teacher, with implicit obedience, he is warned not to do so till he has thoroughly investigated his character and doctrine: to act blindly and slavishly is the highest wrong.

Another sect of Râma worshippers is that of Dâdu, the cotton-cleaner, also a disciple of Kabir. Here are a few of his sentences:[1]—

Dâdu.

"He is my God, who maketh all things perfect. Meditate on Him in whose hands are life and death. He provideth for all. He is my friend."

"In all your thoughts, words, and actions, let there be faith in God. O foolish one! God is not far from you. You are ignorant; but he knoweth every thing, and is careful in bestowing."

"Care can avail nothing: it devoureth life; for those things shall happen which God shall direct."

"He who causes all living things to be giveth milk to their mouths, while yet in the womb."

"Oh, forget not, my brother, that God's power is always with you: there is a formidable pass within you, and crowds of evil passions flock to it; therefore comprehend God."

"He who hath but one grain of the love of God shall be released from all his sinful doubts and actions. Who need cook or grind? Wherever you cast your eyes, ye may see provisions."

"I take for my spiritual food the water and the leaf of Râm: for the world I care not, but God's love is unfathomable."

"Whatever is God's will shall surely happen: therefore do not destroy yourselves by anxiety, but listen."

"Fix your heart on God, and be humble as though you were dead."

"Have no desires, but accept what circumstances may bring you: whatever God pleaseth to direct can never be wrong. Go not about, fearing from the tree which is invisible."

"Dâdu saith, 'Do unto me, O God! as thou thinkest best: I am obedient unto thee. My disciples, behold no other God, go nowhere but to Him.'"

"Condemn nothing the Creator hath made. We are not creators. He can make what He will: we can make nothing."

[1] Wilson, *ut supra*, pp. 106–113. From Siddons's translation in the *Journal of the Bengal Society*.

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"Meditate on the mysterious affinity between God and the soul."

"Even as you see your countenance reflected in a mirror, or your shadow in still water, so behold Râm in your minds, because He is with all."

"He that formed the mind made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in. Receive that which is perfect into your hearts: abandon all things for the love of God."

"God ever fostereth his creatures; even as a mother serves her offspring, and keepeth it from harm."

"O God who art the truth! grant me contentment, love, devotion, faith. Thy servant Dâdu prayeth for true patience, and that he may be devoted to thee.

"Dâdu saith, 'My earnings are God. He is my food and my supporter. God is my clothing and my dwelling. He is my ruler, my body, and my soul.'"

"Listen to God's admonitions, and you will care not for hunger nor thirst, for heat nor cold. If ye subdue the imperfections of your flesh, you will think only of God. When you cease to call on Him, they will return to you."

"Dâdu loved Râma without ceasing: he partook of his spiritual essence, and constantly examined the mirror within him; he overcame all evil inclinations: wherefore the light of Râma will shine upon him."

"Sit humbly at the foot of God, and rid yourselves of bodily impurity."

"Be fearless and guide yourselves towards the light of God: there neither sword nor poison have power to destroy, and sin cannot enter."

"Afford help also to the poor stranger."

"Meditate on Him by whom all things were made. Pundits and Qazis are fools: of what avail are the heaps of books they have compiled?"

"Wear not away your lives by studying the Vedas. Meditate on God, the beginning and the end."

"Do nothing, O man! till thou hast thoroughly sifted thy intentions: acquaint thyself thoroughly with the purity of thy wishes, that thou mayest be absorbed in God. Endeavor to gain Him: nor hesitate to restore your soul, when required, to that abode from whence it came."

The belief of the followers of *Bábá-lál* is a combina-

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tion of the Vedânta and Sufi tenets. It illustrates in like manner that union of speculative mysticism with practical benevolence, of which Buddhism was the earliest expression. This teacher, when asked which is the best religion, replied: —

Bâbâ-lâl.

"The creed of the lover differs from other creeds. God is the faith and creed of those who love him. To do good is the best for the follower of every faith. And, as Hafiz says, — The object of all religions is alike: all men seek their beloved. What is the difference between prudent and wild? All the world is love's dwelling: why talk of a mosque or a church?"

The following sentences[1] illustrate his teaching: —

"With whom should the fakir cultivate intimacy? With the lord of loveliness. To whom be a stranger? To covetousness, anger, envy, falsehood, malice. Should he wear garments or go naked? Nudity is excusable only in the insane. The love of God does not depend on a cap or a coat. How conduct himself? He should perform what he promises, and not promise what he cannot perform."

"Should evil be done to evil-doers? He should do evil to none. Hafiz says, 'The repose of the two worlds depends on two rules, kindness to friends and gentleness to foes.'"

"Is it necessary for a fakir to withdraw from the world? What is the world? Forgetfulness of God, not clothes, nor wealth, nor wife, nor offspring."

"What is the fakir's passion? Knowledge of God. What his power? Impotence. What his wisdom? Devotion of the heart to the heart's Lord. What is the fakir's dwelling? God's creatures. His kingdom? God."

"How do the supreme soul and the living [individual] soul differ? The supreme soul is beyond accident, but the living soul is afflicted by sense and passion. Happiness is attained only in reunion with the One, when the dispersed portions combine again with it, as the drops of water with the parent stream."

"The body only separates from God. Blessed be the moment when I shall lift the veil from off that face. The veil of the face of my beloved is the dust of my body."

[1] Wilson, I. 349, 350.

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VI.

BUDDHIST CIVILIZATION.

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BUDDHIST CIVILIZATION.

AS a distinctive religion, Buddhism has vanished from its native soil; surviving only in those qualities of thought and sentiment out of which it grew, and to which, in their Hindu forms, it gave fresh vigor. But, in the view of universal religion, this is its real triumph. Positive religions affirm their own substance to be sacrifice, — of the lower to the higher, of the special to the ideal. Nature takes them at their word. Their formulas, that seemed final, pass; their sacred names are no longer pronounced with awe; their proscriptive masterships are set aside; their body perishes, and they are changed. But their after-life is their best. The shell of symbol thrown aside, the immortal essence escapes, to work freely as a universal force, and in the whole movement of human life. Expansion.

So with Buddhism in India. Its *karma* passed into a new soul. Its sainthood returned from the gates of *nirvâna*, to assume fresh forms; veiled by new names and relations, wherein the closer eye may discern its life-beyond-death. But its distinctive triumphs have been without the limits of India. It justified itself also by its *expansive* power. In the seventh century Hiouen Thsang found, even in the most flourishing Buddhist

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states, many signs of its approaching decay, — powerful heresies, deserted monasteries, and fallen shrines. Two more centuries, and the faith of fifteen hundred years is cast out: the name of Gotama Buddha, in India, has had its day. The peaceful debates of its schools, that had divided every great Hindu state, the polemics of its moral and metaphysical sects, *the Great and Little Vehicles*, shall no more be heard. The first act of a darker drama has swept away the preachers of peace: the second is at hand; for the conquering Moslem approaches from the north. The persecution of the Buddhists is the natural precursor of a social disunity which lays this magnificent empire at the mercy of a horde of invaders.

Persecution only roused the zeal of those messengers of mercy and release. They flocked north, south, east, and west; bearing the relics of their saints, and the writings of their schools, and planting their seats of culture in the desert and the populous place. But they had not waited for persecution. For two centuries or more from the death of Gotama, there are no records of Buddhist expansion, nor signs of the use of written memorials by the new faith.[1] Yet at the end of that time it had become the state religion of northern India. At the close of the first Christian century it had gone far towards converting Ceylon, Kashmir, Kabulistân, and southern Tartary. Even in China, princes had adopted it, and translations of Buddhist writings overflowed this empire of rationalists.[2] The earliest missionaries had appeared in the third century B.C. Six centuries afterwards India was a holy land of Chinese pilgrimage. From Ceylon this living and welcome belief spread on to further

[1] Koeppen, I. 184. [2] Lassen, II. 1078

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India, Burmah, Siam, and the Eastern Archipelago. From northern India it reached away over the Thibetan steppes; from China to Korēa and Japan.[1] Certain Chinese records of the fifth century, combined with a few slight analogies, mythological and other, have been held sufficient, with not a few scholars, to prove that it must have penetrated even to Mexico.[2] As it would be difficult to find a civilization more in contrast with Buddhism than the Mexican, such theories can only be regarded as signs of the impression made by the expansive energy of this religion on the European mind.[3] They are quite unimportant beside the marvellous record of history, that, after twenty-five centuries of life, Buddhism is, with all its gospel of sorrow, at present the most widely spread religion of the East; that its adherents outnumber those of Brahma three to one; and that they constitute at the lowest estimate a quarter of the human race.

How impressive is Father Huc's account of the wandering Lamas, a body of men whose vocation is not indeed that of preaching, but who carry with them their opinions and ceremonies, and are doubtless the practical propagators of the faith! "They visit all accessible countries. There is not a river they have not crossed, a mountain they have not ascended, a people among whom they have not lived, and of whom they do not know the manners and the language. One would say they are under the influence of some mysterious power which drives them on-

[1] Lassen, IV. 710; Müller, *Sc. of Lang.*, I. 147; *Journ. R. A. S.*, VI. 278.

[2] This theory, for which see Lassen (IV. 754) and Wuttke (I. 348), has been fully disposed of by J. G. Müller, *Gesch. d. Amer. Urreligionen* (Basel, 1867), pp. 9, 490.

[3] So Pococke (*India in Greece*, London, 1852) displayed great ingenuity in an attempt to trace every name in Greek mythology, geography, and history to a Buddhist origin, on linguistic grounds alone.

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wards; and it seems as if God had caused to flow in their veins something of that motive force which moves worlds forwards in their course."[1] This mysterious instinct has possessed Buddhism from the beginning. It must spring in part from a sense of universality,—of duties, needs, sympathies, and hopes, felt as common to all mankind. It is the thirst for communion, a democratic religious faith that knows no bounds of country, creed, nor name. Even that vagabond life, that vague, restless roving which reminded this Christian missionary of "The Wandering Jew," is evidently a relic of the primitive ardor of Buddhism to emancipate the world. What motive power it must have had in the day of its definite and conscious aims!

Asoka.

The direct effects of Gotama's practical, peaceful, philanthropic gospel are to be studied in the edicts of king Aśoka, inscribed on monumental rocks and pillars in various parts of northern India.[2] These inscriptions record at once the legislation of this Buddhist ruler, and his convictions and motives. They announce themselves as his own words, cut in the stone at his command, and their authenticity is beyond question. The history of Aśoka, as derived from Singhalese records and from these monuments, is a wonderful one. About the middle of the third

[1] Huc's *Journey*, &c., I. 117.

[2] For the substance of these remarkable records, and the evidences of their antiquity and authorship, see Lassen, II. 214–270; Muir's *Sansk. Texts*, vol. ii.; and Koeppen, I. 173–178. Consult also Sykes's *Notes*, &c., in *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. vi. Professor Wilson reviewed Prinsep's translation of them, in *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. xii. In a later review (vol. xvi.) he withdraws his doubts as to their Buddhistic origin. Buddhism is not mentioned by name, but the emblems are unmistakable. The inscriptions are written in a "corrupt Sanskrit," closely resembling Pâli, the language in which the oldest works of Buddhism are written, and which was vernacular in northern India when it arose (Muir, II. 72, 104). The name they give the king is *Piyadasi* (the benevolent), a term applied to Aśoka, in Buddhist writings. Lassen, II. 223.

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century B.C. a prince succeeded to the crown of Pâtaliputra, whose passions earned him the title of "*the wrathful*." He was a devoted follower of the Brahmans, but stained, according to tradition, with the blood of a brother, who stood in the way of his succession to the throne. In four years he had become a Buddhist disciple. His character changed with his faith. Instead of "the wrathful" he was called "the just." "Every good man," he said, "will I hold as my own child." He caused inns to be built, and wells opened, and trees planted along the public roads, to give shelter and refreshment for man and beast. He regulated the treatment of animals throughout his dominions according to Buddhist precepts, and forbade their slaughter for sacrificial purposes. It is probable that he abolished the death penalty, and certain that he gradually narrowed its use, until it became almost, if not quite, obsolete. His treatment of prisoners taken in war was of the most humane nature. He recognized freedom of thought and established universal toleration.

The inscriptions say: —

"The king, beloved of the gods, honors every form of religious faith; but considers no gift nor honor so much as the increase of the substance of religion; whereof this is the root, — to reverence one's own faith, and never to revile that of others. Whoever acts differently injures his own religion, while he wrongs another's. The texts of all forms of religion shall be followed, under my protection. Duty is in respect and service. Alms and pious demonstrations are of no worth compared with the loving-kindness of religion. The festival that bears great fruit is the festival of duty. The king's purpose is to increase the mercy, charity, truth, kindness, and piety of all mankind. There is no gift like the gift of virtue. Good is liberality; good it is to harm no living creature; good to abstain from slander; good is the care of one's parents, kindness to relatives, children, friends, slaves. — That these good things may

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increase, the king and his descendants shall maintain the law. Ministers of morals shall everywhere aid the charitable and good. I will always hear my people's voice. I distribute my wealth for the good of all mankind, for which I am ever laboring." [1]

To the Brahmans, whose disciplines he had renounced, he paid respect, and gave substantial favors to such of them as he thought sincere and liberal in their spirit. He built monasteries for the Buddhists; regulated their cultus; held their most important synod, to whose labors the oldest *sutras* are probably due; and spared no effort to make their preaching effectual. He is believed to have erected eighty-four thousand topes, or relic shrines; probably a mystical number. He sent friendly embassies to foreign lands, to propagate the faith. His civil regulations showed the highest regard for justice and humanity. He appointed a corps of officers to keep him informed, at all times, of every thing in the condition of his people that required his attention, fearing only lest any private pleasure should distract his mind from the care of their peace. He instituted another class of officers for the purpose of *preventing crime;* placing them at the outskirts of towns where crowds were wont to assemble, commissioned to dissuade people from wrong-doing without resorting to violence. Finally, he declared that he could not, with all these endeavors, satisfy his sense of responsibility, as a king, for his people's moral and social condition, nor his inmost desire for their good. "There is no higher duty than to work for the good of the whole world."

Such are the earliest products of Buddhism in personal life, which at this distance of time can be

[1] These extracts are from Wilson's revision of Prinsep's translation, and from Lassen's full account of Asoka.

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clearly discerned. Aśoka has been called "the Buddhist Constantine" from his temporal services to this gospel of the East; but, as a ruler, he seems to resemble the great heathen emperor, Marcus Aurelius, far more than that most unscrupulous patron of Christianity. And even if the records of his life and government were less fully accredited than, as a whole, they really are, the conception of such a monarch, at that epoch and in that quarter of the world, would be a fact quite as interesting as the actual man.

The story of his son, Kunâla (so called from the beauty of his eyes), who, after being deprived of these organs in consequence of the false testimony of an unprincipled and cruel woman, intercedes to save her from the consequences of her crimes, may or may not be historical, but has a like value as testimony to a moral ideal. Kunâla.

The account given in the Mahâvanśa, of Dushtagâmini, who reigned in Ceylon in the second century B.C., is involved, as indeed is this whole sacred chronicle, in a mass of mythical legend; but it bears witness none the less positively to the practical excellence of Buddhism.[1] This monarch, also, is reported to have been a model of devotion to the interests of his people, moral, industrial, social, and æsthetic. He especially furthered agriculture, and opened roads through his dominions. Like Aśoka, he built hospitals, and endowed monasteries with the greatest zeal. Both these kings seem to have contributed to the improvement of Hindu architecture, by erecting religious edifices on a magnificent Dushtagâmini.

[1] See Lassen, II. 421–430; *Mahâvanśa* (Turnour), ch. xxiv.–xxxiii.

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scale. The description of Dushtagâmini's pious labors in erecting the stupendous dagop of Ruanvelli, to fulfil the prediction of his ancestors regarding his own reign, reminds us in many ways of the building of Solomon's Temple to Jehovah; but the mythical splendors that invest the Buddhist work are nowise paralleled by Hebrew tradition. The noble edict is recorded of this king, that no part of his great work should be accomplished by unpaid labor.[1] When, at the close of life, his good deeds to the poor and in furtherance of his faith, are enumerated in his presence, in order to overcome his natural shrinking from death, — he replies: "With these works I am not satisfied: the two alms-deeds which I did while I was in want, and which I performed without regarding my life, I prefer to the whole." Then, calling his brother, who is to be his successor, he charges him not only to complete the religious works thus begun, failing in no form of benevolence or of care for the faith, but to "do no harm to the people, and to rule the kingdom with justice;" and then lies silently down to die, facing the *dagop* he had made, while the *devatas* (celestial beings) invite him in the air, saying, "Our lord is glorious and possesses longer life: come then hither, come then hither." Beseeching them to suffer him, as long as he lives, to hear the teaching of the faith, he raises his hand. The movement is mistaken by the priests for a gesture of fear, and they say to one another: "There is no one that does not fear death." But the king, having expired, is borne away in a chariot, like a man awakened out of a deep sleep; and then, to show his glory to the people, he reappears in splendor, driving thrice around the sacred pile,

[1] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxx.

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that they may see the heavenly glory he has attained.[1]

It is an unreliable version which ascribes to this king a harem of Solomonic proportions: there is not, in the whole story of his reign, the faintest sign of sensuality nor of any other personal vice.

A similar record is given of several other Buddhist rulers of Ceylon in the continuation of the Mahâvanśa. Some of these were scholars and writers, and all were patrons of literature and art.[2] Traditions of the same moral tone celebrate the virtues of the earliest Buddhist rulers of Thibet.[3] One of the Singhalese kings is described as having, among other marvellous powers, such as bringing on rain by his piety, a much better one; namely, that of converting rogues by good counsel. He thus puts a stop to the bad practices of great numbers of thieves, while satisfying his people, who insist on their punishment, by showing dead bodies, on which those penalties had been inflicted which the law would have visited on the living offenders.[4] Another king, of very barbarous tendencies, dissuaded from war by Buddhist priests, who teach him the superior virtue of peace and harmony, thereupon gives up the country he has won, and returns to his own.[5]

Ceylonese legends.

Leaving these old traditions, we turn to the present Buddhists of Thibet. All travellers testify to their simplicity, gentleness, and freedom from sensual excesses. Huc tells us their theory is that "all men are brothers."[6] "The regent of Lha-Ssa," he says, "did not appear surprised at any thing

Buddhism in Thibet.

[1] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxii.
[2] See abstract in Lassen, IV. 279-350.
[3] Koeppen, II. 65, 73.
[4] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxxvi.
[5] Ibid. (Upham), ch. lxx.
[6] *Travels through Thibet*, I. 43, 170, II. 40, 107.

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in Christian teaching, but incessantly repeated, 'Your religion is like our own: the truths are the same, we only differ in the explanation.'" The good missionary indeed found it not easy to understand the pantheism into which this liberal and hospitable faith resolved itself. Yet nothing could be finer, even as manners only, than the cordiality and courage with which the Buddhist ruler entered into free inquiry as to the respective merits of his own and the foreign belief, promising to adopt the latter, if it should appear to be the better one.[1] The Thibetans exhibit none of that exclusiveness towards foreigners which the Chinese and other Asiatic nations have been driven into adopting. They seem to have even a careful interest in strangers, and lose no opportunity of kindly service. The missionaries, near to perishing of hunger and wet in the desert, for lack of fire and fuel, were accosted by a band of Tartars, leading a laden camel: "My lords Lamas, the sky has fallen to-day: doubtless you have not been able to light your fire; but men are all brothers and belong to one another, and the lay should serve the holy; so we are come to light your fire for you."[2]

When the animals of a caravan go astray, whoever is in the neighborhood must go seek them; and, if they cannot be found, give others in their place.[3] "We will search for your horses," said the Tartar chief to Huc, "and, if they are not found, you shall choose at pleasure from all our herds. We wish you to leave us in peace as you came." Contrast these civil tribes with their ancestors, the barbarian hordes of Tschingis-khan, following the wolf's head on their banners to incessant ravin, piling pyramids of human heads along their path, merciless alike to the weak and the

[1] *Travels through Thibet*, II. 203. [2] Ibid., I. 43. [3] Ibid., I. 64.

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strong.[1] Security of life and property reigns among them to a degree undreamed of in Europe during the Middle Ages; and the change is almost entirely the work of Lamaism.[2] "The humane doctrine of Buddha has greatly softened, if it has not eradicated their old savage traits.[3] Thus women in Tartary are in a more independent position than is usual in the East. They come and go as they please, are active, cheerful, and of free bearing, notwithstanding the old marriage regulations which still oppress the sex.[4] Huc says that all but the highest classes are in a mild form of slavery; but it is hard to understand in what sense this is true, since their mode of life is precisely that of their masters, and, if they enter the tents of the latter, they are always offered the customary courtesies.

Thibetan literature and law.

It was through Buddhism that literature and law were introduced among the rude tribes of Thibet. The traditions tell us of a hundred translators and teachers of the sacred books invited from India in the ninth century, who at last completed this new gospel in a hundred folio volumes,[5] to be revised and retranslated five centuries later under the auspices of the great Buddhist monarch, Kublai Khan. Previous to this time, Buddhist scholars had constructed a new alphabet for the Mongolian tribes.[6]

The superstitious and savage Mongols who mastered these highlands in the thirteenth century were met and controlled by the devotion of a Buddhist monk, Thsong-kha-pa, who revived the best elements

[1] Wuttke, I. 244–248. [2] Koeppen, I. 482. [3] Ibid., from Neumann.
[4] Huc, I. 185. A similar position is accorded to women in Siam. *Journal of Indian Archipelago*, 1847.
[5] Lassen, IV. 716. [6] Koeppen, II. 99–101.

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of primitive Buddhism, then rapidly yielding to the superstitions of a degraded form of Śiva-worship. This earnest preacher of devout meditation and social order and harmony, setting bounds to the coarse fetichism of the nomads, directed the religious sentiment to ideas, and to the broader forms and disciplines that ideas demand. He was in fact the father of the real Catholic Church of Central Asia. The true Thibetan papacy of the "yellow hat" Lamas, as distinguished from the older and ruder "red hat" priests, goes back to Thsong-kha-pa. He came to be venerated as first incarnation of the phenomenal portion of the Buddha, which perpetually renews itself by transmigration, to preserve the unity of his Church, in an endless succession of Dalai Lamas, or "Oceans of Sanctity."[1]

Civilizing power of Buddhism.

It is not easy to overestimate the benefits of that incessant emphasis on benevolent, and even tender and compassionate sentiments, which everywhere accompanied the effort to unite these tribes in a universal church. Through all the grossness into which Buddhism has degenerated, we can trace the invincible leaven of practical humanity, everywhere neutralizing ignorance, inertia, and despair. An ample collection of testimonies to this effect may be read in Koeppen's masterly work, from which I select a few examples. Such are the reports given by Symes and others, of the manners of the Burmese, as in some respects wild and barbarous, but in others exhibiting the delicate sensibilities of a cultivated people,[2]—thoughtful for the sick, the weak, and the old, placable towards enemies and hospitable to

[1] Lassen, IV. 725; Koeppen, II. 70, 112.

[2] Malcom (*Travels in Burmah*) says: "During my whole residence in this country, I never saw an immodest act or gesture in man or woman."

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strangers; — by Crawford, of the kindness of the Siamese and Burmese to the shipwrecked, now regarded as a religious duty towards those whom they were used to despoil; — by Pallegoix, of the custom with private persons in Siam of placing hospitals and night-lodgings along the roadsides and rivers, for the use of wayfarers, while large vessels are daily filled with water, by the peasant women, for their refreshment; — and by travellers generally, of the condemnation of crimes like theft and murder, by the Siamese as a people, notwithstanding the great number of rogues and vagabonds that infest the country.[1] "Vast numbers of the poor in Christian countries," says a competent witness,[2] "may well envy the corresponding class in Siam."

Its vestiges.

Wherever Buddhism has extended, even where it has fallen from the simplicity of its earliest inspirations into manifold mummeries and fanaticisms, there still remains this redeeming presence of the spirit of brotherhood. "Popular education has reached a considerable degree of advancement in all Buddhist countries. Every town, almost every secluded village, has its monastery occupied by monks, who, either with or without pay, give instruction to children, affording to all the means of acquiring elementary knowledge; so that it is really rare to find persons who can neither read nor write."[3] There are institutions everywhere for the sick, orphaned, and poor; wells in every desert; shady groves along every dusty road; everywhere missionaries of comfort and relief; everywhere tender mercies towards the lower

[1] Koeppen, I. 455–486. See also Nevins's *China*, pp. 214–218.
[2] Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law*, p. lvi.
[3] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.* (Berlin, 1870), p. 37. St. Hilaire, p. 400.

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creatures; and this not confined to regulations in restraint of their wanton abuse and destruction, but carried even to that extravagance of care and protection which naturally belongs to an idealism without sense of practical limits. Buddhism has everywhere sought to abolish bloody sacrifices, and in most Asiatic countries with success; bringing, in place of these barbarities of religious service, mystical and fragrant incense, and the tender beauty of flowers. And with the same endeavor to refer sacrifice to its true conception, as a consecration by love, the believers, from the first, contributed alms to the priests; gifts for the support of the temples; milk, butter, cheese, and various kinds of drink, according to their occupations and means. But these gifts were never to be burned, nor poured out as libations, nor given with any idolatrous notion that they were eaten or drunk by the Buddhas, as the older Semites believed their blood offerings were by Baal and Jehovah. If animals are sometimes offered in Buddhist countries, it is never to the Buddha.[1] Deity indeed, to accord with the conception of *nirvána*, must be as profoundly independent of outward tributes as, for the Semitic idea, it is dependent on them; and, if allowing slighter hold than this idea for personal relations with the worshipper, it at least did not force the imagination to divine the unknown and indefinite demands of a jealous master; a demoralization *by fear* in which the most degrading forms of sacrifice have originated. The instincts of love and devotion were left to find their own spontaneous expression.

"The worship of the Hindu deities in Ceylon," says Tennent, "is devoid of the obscenities and cruelty by which it is characterized on the continent of India

[1] Koeppen, I. 561.

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and it would almost appear as if these had been discontinued by the Brahmans in compliment to the superior purity of the worship with which their own had been fortuitously connected."[1] Slaves have been received even by Buddhist monasteries in this island, where caste has not wholly yielded to the civilizing influences of that humane faith; but Singhalese slavery, according to the same observer, "is domestic, not predial. It was so mild that, when, in 1845, Lord Stanley abolished it, no claim was made by masters for compensation."[2]

Wherever Buddhism has penetrated, it has abolished human sacrifice, which still prevails in portions of India never yet subjected to its influence. It has constantly discouraged capital punishment; and in many parts of Asia it has succeeded, at various times and for longer or shorter periods, in setting the death penalty aside.

"Buddhism has been violently persecuted at various times and in various countries. It appears never to have dreamed of revenge."[3] It has been faithful to its principle that truth is not to be imposed by violence; that opinion must be free. Its rejection of bloodshed has been absolute. Beside the history of its peaceful progress, the records of Islam and Christianity are black with tyranny and hate. If it has not prevented civil wars in a colossal empire like China, we must remember that its essential ideas have been a constant restraint on them, and probably contributed, as much as any thing, to that social order and national unity through nearly four thousand years, which has been in many respects the most marvellous fact in the political history of mankind.

Peaceful and tolerant spirit.

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*, I. 536. [2] Ibid., ch. i. [3] St. Hilaire, p. 400.

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Recognition of universal religion.

Buddhism reached the conception that all religions have been apprehensions, with greater or less distinctness, of one eternal faith; so that it has felt a kindly yearning towards all of them, sought to find their common good elements, and to give each a place in the theory of its *dharma* or Law. It assigns one of its highest heavens to the virtuous of other religions. It knows no heathen hated of God, only a common humanity seeking for eternal life. "When Śâkyamuni came to earth," say the Lamaists, "he found that all peoples were not equally capable of receiving his whole law. He therefore gave to each what truths it was able to apprehend, and so spread his blessing over all. And of all these, not one that follows its own light, shall be lost."[1] The Mahâvanśa relates of Dushtagâmini, that, among the images of deities in act of homage to Buddha, which he made to adorn his great dagop, was that of the Buddhist Satan, ascending humbly, with his host of followers, to praise with the rest the power of goodness he had vainly striven to overturn.[2] The legend of the conversion of Kashmir makes the *Nagas* (water serpents) oppose the civilizing gospel and attempt to destroy its apostles. Not only are their stones and arrows turned to flowers as they fall, but their chiefs, instead of being annihilated, are *converted*, to rejoice in a land which from a desert has been transformed into a garden.[3]

Towards Christians Buddhism has always shown

[1] Bergmann, in Koeppen, I. 462; Bastian, *ut supra*, p. 26.

[2] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxx. The reply of the priests to the scruples of this king at having destroyed thousands of lives in war, that "heretics" were "no better than wild beasts" (*Mahâv.* ch. xxv.), is at once condemned by the chronicler: a fact not mentioned by Hardy, who quotes the saying to discredit Buddhism. (*Eastern Monachism*, p. 415.)

[3] *Journ. Asiatique*, for 1865, pp. 490, 505. In Indian mythology, serpents stand for rude primitive powers, whether of man or nature; while the eagle, *garuda*, represents the divine forces that subdue them.

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this broad hospitality. It was among the Mongolian tribes of Central Asia that they found readiest access; with Tschingis-Khan and his successors, who gloried in acknowledging one God, and the many ways in which men might serve Him. Marco Polo records the declaration of Kublai-Khan, that he "reverenced the four great Prophets, — Jesus, Mahomet, Moses, and Buddha."

Ruysbrock relates that Kublai-Khan, after witnessing a long discussion between disciples of different faiths, said to a Franciscan, holding up his hand: "How many fingers here?" Answer: "Five." "Yet 'tis the same hand, for all. So with your religions." A Buddhist priest in Ceylon, we are told by Tennent,[1] not long since wrote a book about Jesus, in which he expressed the belief that he had pre-existed, after the Buddhist way, as a God, and had dwelt in six heavens; then taken flesh, through his good-will to man, and taught the truth, as far as it was given him; in short, that he was, in some sense, a Buddha. The same writer records the remark of a Ceylonese chief to a missionary, upon entering his son at the mission-school: "I would add your religion to steady my own, holding Christianity to be a very safe outrigger to Buddhism." The edict of Aśoka, proclaiming universal toleration and affirming his preference of conduct that should bring any religion into good repute, to all alms-giving and all personal homage, has its modern counterpart in the entire religious freedom established by the late King of Siam in all his dominions; in his special regulations to secure Christian churches from interference, and his endeavors to acquaint himself with the languages and

[1] *Ceylon*, I. 530.

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science of the West, in furtherance of plans for purifying Buddhism from superstitions, and placing it on a basis of pure natural religion.[1] Sir John Bowring quotes a letter from this liberal prince, in which he says: "In inquiries into the nature of God, we cannot tell who is right and who is wrong; but I will pray my God to give you his blessing, and you must pray yours to bless me: thus blessings may fall on both of us."[2] But he told the missionaries plainly: "You must not expect any of us to become Christians. We shall not embrace what we think a foolish religion."[3] Becoming acquainted with European navigation, he at once decreed that the holy Mount Meru, with all its heavens and hells, must be given up, voyages round the world having disproved its existence.[4] So thoroughly is the Buddhist transmigration-system identified with this old religious geography, that this summary dealing with the one must, it would seem, be the death-knell of the other. The courageous honesty of the King of Siam is but a natural result of Buddhist faith in reason and in man.

The Siamese believe that the different confessions are but diverse forms of one true faith; and the practical consequence is the growth of the Free Buddhist churches, now for many years existing in Siam, which reject the miraculous in their ancestral religion, and adhere to its moral teachings only.[5] In China sayings like these are common proverbs: "Religions are many, reason is one: we are all brothers. The three religions have a common standpoint: they insist

[1] Pallegoix and Bowring. See Koeppen, I. 467.

[2] Bowring's *Narrative of the Mission to Siam*, I. 349. His very intelligent correspondence with Bowring (in English) is printed in the appendix to the same work.

[3] *The Modern Buddhist* (Alabaster), p. 73. [4] Bastian, *Weltauff.*, &c., p. 34.

[5] Koeppen, I. 468.

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on the banishment of wrong desires." And this is not merely the commonplace of a formalism which M. Huc rather contemptuously calls "Chinese politeness" in religion, but the practical principle and policy of the empire; made, so far as foreign interference will permit, the basis of the relation between Church and State. The frank liberality of the regent of Thibet to the Catholic missionaries, and his readiness to discover that, on the whole, there was no serious difference of faith between him and them, is of the same quality, and truly Buddhist. Spence Hardy speaks of Brahmanical ceremonies as side by side with Buddhist in Ceylon, and of the ease with which native temples can be obtained, if desired, for Christian worship.

Persecution, in Buddhist countries, has in fact always been the result of wrongful interference from without. The Chinese have expelled European missionaries only when they began to plot for overthrowing the government. It was the *piracy* of the Portuguese that caused their expulsion from Japan, not their religious belief. Recent attempts of Catholic priests in Siam to destroy the native temples have been met by a forbearance unknown in the Christian world. The large-hearted king actually counselled his people to ignore the injuries done them by Christians who were the pensioners of his bounty.[1]

The controversial element.

This spirit is no less apparent in the sectarian discussions, which have abounded at every period of Buddhist history. They exhausted every form of Oriental metaphysics, every question of ecclesiastical discipline and practical duty. Yet they were conducted with a mutual toleration that has probably

[1] Bastian, *ut supra*, p. 26. The virtues and failings of this king are described in Mrs. Leonowens's work, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870).

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never been equalled in the history of religious controversy. "Though the vessels differ, the water is the same," say the Chinese sutras. "Though the flame be of various lamps, the illumination is one: so with the difference of the two *Vehicles*." Tennent says of Singhalese Buddhism, that "its toleration of heresy is intolerance of schism." But he admits that the quarrels of Christian sects have repelled the Singhalese from their teachings.[1] Hiouen Thsang found all the kingdoms of India agitated by the strife between the schools of the *Great and Little Vehicles*, the former advancing to the metaphysical basis of Buddhism, the latter confined to its moral, ecclesiastical, and mythic elements. Notwithstanding the extent of the difference, and the spread of this schism through the whole Buddhist church, these contending sects were living, upon the whole, at peace, without attempting to oppress or exclude each other; and Hiouen Thsang hardly mentions a single act of fanatical violence. On his return to China, though a devoted follower of the *Great Vehicle*, he translated the books of his opponents with entire impartiality.[2] Throughout the history of this Church of Humanity, a commandment which has been the prolific seed of Catholic and Protestant intolerance, the "*compelle intrare*," is wholly unknown.

Buddhist toleration not indifference.

In all forms of Buddhism, rationalistic, ethical, philosophical, the principle of religious freedom stands, a constant factor. It belongs to the essence of the faith.

According to most Christian writers, this is because the essence of Buddhism is "indifference in religion." The injustice of such a charge against the

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*, II. 545. [2] St. Hilaire, p. 301–306.

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most ardent missionaries in the ancient world is too evident to be discussed. Others find the explanation in the "negative" spirit of this religion. "How should they who believe the highest truth is in knowing nothing, persecute others for knowing less than themselves? Intolerance grows out of the necessities of an actual Church and an actual State. How should they persecute, to whom both Church and State are unreal?"[1] But the supposed "nihilism" of the Buddhists has already received our attention. Even were there more justice in the imputation than there is, the fact remains to be explained that they who are so intensely devoted to the propagation of nihilism should exhibit such liberality towards the intensest opponents thereof. If knowing nothing is the highest good, then the pretence of knowing any thing is the utmost mischief; and it is hard to say why he who finds motive for zeal in love of the one should not find motive for severity in hatred of the other. However unreal in essence Church and State may be for the Buddhist mind, it is to the extension of the Church and the conversion of the State that it has been devoted for more than a thousand years, and there must be something more positive and potent than mere insensibility to the worth of right knowledge, which has kept it broad and sweet, hospitable and tolerant to all opposing creeds. An attitude of negation is essentially an attitude of opposition; and the path of opposition is the path to *enmity* just in proportion to the degree in which the affirmative and receptive spirit is excluded from it. How, then, is the tolerance of Buddhism to be explained as a fruit of its *negative* qualities? How is it we have not here a set of morose and bitter misanthropes, skeptical of all good in their fellow-men?

[1] See Wuttke, II. 586.

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St. Hilaire, who believes these millions to be pure nihilists, utterly "without one trace of the idea of a God," is very naturally unable to explain the fact that "so much ignorance should be accompanied by a virtue that seems to demand so much light and so rare a sense of justice." And he contents himself with recognizing the fact without attempting to solve it, except by stating it to have been in part "an imitation of the tolerant spirit of Brahmanism."[1]

Other theories.

Some, again, have ascribed this liberal tone of Buddhism to an inability to appreciate the "sinfulness of sin;" which might indeed be a sufficient reason for expecting men to *manifest* such easily besetting sins as uncharitableness, but hardly explains *the victory over it*, especially when, as here, this result is attended by a painful perception of moral penalties and a rigid moral discipline.

Others, more rationally, refer us to the peculiar circumstances under which Buddhism was compelled to struggle into life; to a resistance in ancestral institutions which it could not hope to overcome by any *outward* force at its command.

Freedom from religious monarchism.

More significant, however, is the truth that is now beginning to be recognized by students of Comparative Religion, that intolerance is an incident of distinctive *monotheism* or *monarchism*. The belief that the law of duty is the imposed will of a Being external to man and the world, having its authority in his right and power to send down his special edicts to a separate and subject race, and to secure recognition and obedience to his exclusive messengers, — this belief, standing as the substance of religious obligation, is the inevitable parent of per-

[1] *Le Bouddha*, p. 286.

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secution. With whatever good elements it may be combined, the right of an imposed, external divine Will issues in human Inquisitions, and the *compelle intrare* of the Church. It is the energetic infusion of this monarchism in Judaism and Christianity, which has made intolerance their perpetual vice or their subtle tendency. On the other hand, and by reason of the total *absence* of this monarchical interest, whatever the perils that attend pantheism, or any other form of belief which tends to *identify* the substance of the human and the divine, this of attempting forcible entrance on the domain of reason and conscience, in the name of sovereign will, is not one of them. Now if Buddhism is not strictly pantheistic, if it does not in *terms* identify the substance of the human with the divine, it in fact assumes their unity to be essential, and not arbitrary nor imposed. It seeks the divine *through* the human, and makes the self-abnegation through which it is attained a strictly human volition. Nirvâna, whatever be its peculiar meaning, certainly expresses the free choice and fulfilled capacity of the Buddha. In other words, it is *Man "awakened"* to his real being. Buddhism, therefore, appeals to no monarchical will absolutely external to human nature. And, when it denies validity to every definite form of human thought and being, this is not that it may affirm the infinite to be altogether *apart from man;* but that it may find the infinite, somehow, *involved in his process* of emancipation from all dreams and illusions into the reality of his essential Buddhahood. And no exclusive messenger to human nature is here possible, since humanity is itself defined as having no *real* being apart from this process and result. For these reasons, if for no other, Buddhism can assert no

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authority but such as is awarded it by the free consciousness of man: its doctrines must rest on their own intrinsic merits, and their appeal must be to reason, not to force. Its starting point is not in an external command, but in an inward free aspiration.

Origin in free protest and aspiration.

And this was indeed historically its origin. It was a spontaneous protest, metaphysical and practical, against the twofold tyranny of transmigration and caste. It was the reaction of the human against an idea of deity crystallized in texts, in institutions, in endless minute legislation for thought and life. It was an appeal from authority claiming to descend upon man to the force of aspiration *in* man.

And in brotherly love.

But it was not merely the assertion of a human right. It was the cry of human sympathy; the summons of compassion to the rescue of mankind from pain that seemed as wide and deep as life itself. Surely intolerance would be a strange fruit to come from such seed. Surely it would be unaccountable if they, who go out solely to heal suffering and to break bonds, should take with them the cruelest scourge of body and mind. We may easily believe that such instincts of brotherhood as impelled the Buddhist, — being wholly free from that sense of a commission to maintain the exclusive claims of a mediator and a monarchical dogma, which has so often darkened Christianity and Islam with its persecuting spirit — could not fail, however otherwise enfeebled, to reap the benefit of this indemnity in a broader and sweeter flow.

Result.

The tolerant attitude of Buddhism requires no other explanation, apart from the natural tendency of the Hindu mind as shown also in Brahmanism, than the essential quality and aim of the Budd-

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hist movement itself. It is but a part of that humane impulse, which must be fully recognized as substantially its motive power, before either its metaphysical negations or its positive moral ardor can be fairly understood.

As inclusive of all other practical benefits from the propagation of Buddhism, we must add the fact, that it has been a vast force of association; an ideal centre of unity among the rude and isolated races of Asia. With all its pliancy to local peculiarities, and through all diversities of phase, it has given them a common starting-point of religious interest, in place, in time, and in personal homage; and, to no slight extent, a common dogma, a common tradition, and a common literature. It has thus done much in accomplishing that *preliminary* stage in religious growth for the Eastern world which Christianity has so well effected for the West. It has brought the tribes together by missions, explorations, and pilgrimages to distant and widely separated shrines. It has taught them orderly routines, patient disciplines, permanent friendly relations between classes, and, in such defective ways indeed as Oriental genius conditioned and an undeveloped perception of natural laws required, aided them to distinct social and political aims.[1] It is not true that its call to forsake the world as vanity, and to immure life in the convent or the cell, has made it a mere force of social disintegration. The conventual life was a step towards definite and constructive communion. A large proportion of the Buddhist priests lived in the towns

Unifying force.

[1] The crude and coarse material, which was to be leavened, explains the strange mixture of moral elevation with trivial and even repulsive details of special prescription, which characterizes such Buddhist works as the *Catechism of the Chinese Shamans*.

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and cities, were not eremites but cenobites, avoiding the old isolation of the Brahmanical ascetics;[1] and whether as mendicants, or as private teachers, or as employed in other professional services, everywhere formed a real centre for the interests of the people. They are to this day the instructors of the children of the poor in all towns and villages in Buddhist countries.[2] Their preaching of the vanity of life was at least *preaching*, and gathered the multitudes as they had never been gathered before, to breathe the magnetic atmosphere of a common purpose, and feel the thrill of democratic appeal. The degree to which this sense of social equality, *this democratic element*, exists in China, in India, and even in Central Asia, is yet to be appreciated by the Western nations; and Buddhism has been, to an extent which is equally unrecognized, at once its expression and its education.

"Nipâl is covered with *vihâras* (monasteries); but these ample abodes have long resounded with the hum of industry and the pleasant voices of women and children. The convents are always open to new-comers, and for the departure of those who are tired of their vows. Women are regarded as equally worthy of admission with men."[3]

The Nepalese priests have abandoned ascetic practices, and have exclusive inheritance of the professions and trades. The chief maintenance of the *lamas* of Thibet is their own industry. They are artists, schoolmasters, artisans, and laborers in every kind.[4] The dependent condition involved in the mendicancy of the Buddhist priesthood exposes this class to popular contempt, which is to a great degree offset

[1] Koeppen, II. 262.
[2] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.*, p. 37; St. Hilaire, p. 401.
[3] Hodgson, *Transact. of Royal As. Soc.*, II. 256.
[4] Wilson, *Essays*, II. 374; Koeppen, II. 275; Huc, II. 90.

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by the many ways in which they make themselves of general service. In most Buddhist countries, the *Festival of the Plough* is held annually with great honor, all classes, from the monarch down, paying reverence to this symbol of the dignity of labor. In Siam, on these occasions, a "king of the husbandmen" is chosen, who represents the highest authority, and is made the centre of various singular rites. During his brief sovereignty, he receives as his perquisite all fines paid for violating the law against doing work on this festal day.[1]

Significance of Buddhist preaching.

These bold pioneers, these active colonizers, these sturdy democrats, making the far expanses of a continent vocal even with their tidings of a silent world, and alive and prolific by a gospel which actually proclaimed them empty and dead, — what a rebuke they are to all narrow, negative formulas for interpreting the facts of religious history! That they preached absolute renunciation of life, enforced thereto by the absence of science and practical freedom, was really the sign that these two elements were indispensable to the dignity and desirability of life, and that man's ideal nature refused to honor even existence itself on the conditions it then and there presented. And was the instinctive protest wholly blind to this, its own inner meaning? Mark what these idealists did.

Achievements.

They struck out a new doctrine and discipline because the old was stiff and unsocial. They proselyted for it with an energy never equalled before or since, save by that of Catholic Rome. They preached tidings of salvation to the low-caste artisans and laborers; encouraged agriculture, and taught

[1] Crawford's *Mission to Siam.*

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writing and humane manners to the rude rovers of the north.[1] They planted peaceful monasteries for study and contemplation, gathered colossal libraries, created immense bodies of literature, in India, in Nepâl, in Thibet, in Ceylon, in China; and they refreshed with tides of positive enterprise and emigration, in the interest of an ideal aim, all Eastern Asia from Korea to Siam. Architecture and sculpture in central and southern Asia are mainly of their creation. The indications of writing in India commence with their revolution in the interest of the masses.[2] Their recognition of the value of letters is illustrated in their mythical genesis of "the sacred syllable." "First the world was void. The first light was *aum;* thence the alphabet, the seeds of the universe."[3] They may even be said to have created *history* in India by the civil, social, and political agitations which they produced.

Their uninterrupted chronicle of Ceylon, covering nearly the whole period of Buddhist sway in that island, with its valuable chronological data, is, notwithstanding its mythical elements, one of the most important historical documents in Oriental literature. The Buddhist canon in China is seven hundred times as large as the New Testament. Hiouen Thsang's translation of a single set of Sutras is twenty-five times the amount of the Christian Bible. The canonical books of the Thibetans are of dimensions beside which those of other races and religions are insignificant.[4] They number thousands of works, gathered into hundreds of volumes; and the Bible of the southern Buddhists

[1] See St. Hilaire, 370; Koeppen, I. 186, 481; Wuttke, I. 248, II. 559.
[2] Müller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 519. [3] Hodgson, *Trans. R. A. S.*, II. 232.
[4] A summary of the hundred volumes of the *Kah-gyur* is given by Csoma Korösi, in *Asiat. Researches*, vol. xx.

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is equally enormous.[1] Both treat of all forms of Oriental speculation, science, and art.[2] In the sixth century two thousand Buddhist works had been translated into Chinese.[3] The literary industry of these (theoretic) unbelievers in work was immeasurable.

It was the necessity of agricultural development, to meet the practical requirements of a religion which prohibited the taking of life, that stimulated manual toil, and covered Ceylon with reservoirs and consecrated lakes for the irrigation of the country. It was this that measured the praise of the Buddhist kings by the number of tanks and canals, sometimes amounting to thousands, which they had constructed for the "benefit of the country," or "out of compassion for living creatures," or to enrich the Church and maintain its priesthood. Here was a theoretic indolence, that taught kings to plant gardens and reclaim lands; to provide by systematic cultivation the means for gratuitously supplying food to travellers in their dominions; to organize the democratic village communities, with their simple and regular administration of justice; and even to labor in the rice fields with their own hands, "to make their gifts more meritorious!"[4] Here was a contempt for nature and all fleeting forms, that could surround cities with gardens, and bury lofty temples to their summits under votive heaps of flowers, and make every day's especial atmosphere of prayer and praise refresh the worshippers with a new and distinct aroma, from the wealth of their floral world![5] Here was a metaphysical nega-

[1] The Singhalese *Tripitaka* (Three Baskets) contains 350,000 verses. St. Hilaire, p. 380.

[2] Weber's *Vorlesungen*, p. 194; Koeppen, II. 278–280.

[3] Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, p. xxxiii.

[4] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxiv.

[5] Tennent.

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tion of all light and joy, that could come out into recognition of these very things as elements of religious architecture and ritual, far transcending that accorded them by the Christian world; lifting its airy pagodas in the pleasantest sites, enclosed with cheerful galleries and luxuriant gardens and groves; enlivening its *vihâras*, and even the gloom of its rock excavations, with endless carving and painting of symbolic imagery drawn from nature, the animal world, and the arts of social life; performing its sacred rites to the sound of inspiring music, and celebrating periodical feasts of lamps, of images, of birthdays, and of the opening spring![1]

Historic parallels.

There is scarcely any movement in the history of religious enterprise that can be compared to this, except the labors of the Benedictine monks, whose rise made the sixth century of the Christian era memorable, just as the first preaching of Buddhism signalized the sixth century before it. That band of devoted missionaries, who carried Christianity into the wilds of northern Europe, raised woman to equality of ecclesiastical position with man, and opened asylums to outcasts and serfs; who transcribed and diffused copies of their own Scriptures with prodigious industry; who founded schools of music, painting, and architecture; who preserved art and science through the mediæval night, and organized agriculture on a gigantic scale, as acceptable service of God and ennobling work of man, — are the nearest western analogue to these oriental enthusiasts; and not without special resemblance in the proof they afford that man cannot help reluctting with vigor

[1] Koeppen, I. 560–585, II. 300; Lassen, II. 1170. Wilson, *Journ. R. A. S.* (Bombay Branch), vol. iv. On the growth of Buddhist art in Orissa, from mere holes in rocks to temples covered with beautiful imagery, see Hunter, vol. i.

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against all his own theoretic postulates of the "vanity of life."

We should mention also the Moravian brethren, a more recent instance of practical zeal in the service of an ideal that apparently disparaged the present world; — penetrating the remotest regions of barbarism, and piercing Himalayan solitudes, to surmount those colossal heights, and stand side by side with Buddhism on the sacred plateaux of Central Asia.

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VII.

ECCLESIASTICISM.

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ECCLESIASTICISM.

THE practical energy and humanity of Buddhism in its early days, and these later vestiges of a civilizing power which even its degeneracy cannot hide, thoroughly refute the charge that its intellectual skepticism was spiritual despair. They are the cheering signs of a healthful effort of nature to counteract the inertia of the Eastern races; to overcome the physical conditions that held them apart; to compensate for the absence of scientific and social opportunity, and for the inveteracy of institutions; to relieve the monotony of contemplation, endlessly revolving fixed forms of thought, and cycles of destiny. It was from these invincible conditions of race, climate, experience, identified with life itself, that men sought refuge in negations, whose very thoroughness was a path of emancipation, and led out into the grandeur of compassion, sacrifice, love. Yet without science, without friction of races, without the stir of a more ardent life, these conditions *were* invincible. The social status could not supply material for forms of permanent culture which would justify life, *as life*, to man's ideal sense. So this negation penetrated even the humane instincts, and made them subservient to ascetic aims. The Buddhist priesthood be-

Degeneracy.

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came, after an Oriental way, men of action, and constructive forces in the living world; but it was to persuade others to abandon action and renounce the world.[1] The salvation they preached was escape from life, not discovery of its inherent practical values, outward or inward. It was the same in a very large degree with Christianity; but the ethnic connections and opportunities of Christianity, unlike those of Buddhism, have been capable of counteracting the other-worldliness of its own prescribed ideal. The Buddhist priesthood, on the other hand, are still children of the jungle and the steppe, of the brooding Oriental fate. Their active enterprise, their organized efficiency, their democratic zeal, trail with the old languor of the Yogi life in its endless strain against an endless consciousness, moving through nature in a somnambulic way, like the anchoret pacing under his banyan shades. They fail of our Western magnetic sense of the outward capabilities of the actual world, so needful to the evolution of its spiritual uses.

Against these disadvantages, they have put a persistent adherence to their traditions of benevolence as the purpose of life. But even this has proved but an imperfect defence against the *inevitable degeneracy of a positive religion*, in its passage through definite cultus into the form of authoritative institution; while on the other hand they have lacked the energy in *secular* aims which Western races have known how to oppose to this process, and to make available for a continual reconstruction of the religious ideal. They are monks, mendicants, dreamers still, but without

[1] "Leaving all pleasures behind, calling nothing his own, going from his home to a homeless state, and no longer clinging to any thing, the wise will set himself free." — *Dhammap.*, vv. 87–89. Yet the *Prâtimoksha* forbids disparagement of life or commendation of death, however common suicide may have been in later Buddhism. See Beal, *Budd. Pilgrims*, p. xlii.

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the enthusiasm of the founders of their faith; still apostles of negation, but not now in the old way of earnest protest and quickening demand. Their metaphysics are not so much the *keen sense* that perception is of the unreal, as a traditional acquiescence in that conclusion and its results. For the swarming functionaries of a Church two thousand years old, and the hundreds of millions who perform its rites, the dogma of the nothingness of things visible, however conceived, has indeed come to its own self-contradiction both in faith and practice; though certainly not, thus far, in the interest of their proper reality.

Nature's irony.

The world, pronounced a phantom because it is so transient, has become a flood-tide of minute and busy ceremonial observances; it pours upon these preachers of the Void immeasurable details of mythologic and symbolic imagery; it buries them under a tropical rankness of legend, to be compared only with the colossal flora of the carboniferous epoch of the planet. What irony! A God in *nirvâṇa* blooming into a tropic summer of resplendent fable, flowering inexhaustibly in personal portraiture, miracle, metamorphosis! The human body renounced as worthless, vindicating itself in a stupendous veneration of statues and relics! The longing for absolute rest as the crown of virtue, issuing in unbounded devotion to miraculous energies, supposed to flow from saints who have departed for such a rest! Believers in the emptiness of all forms, and even actions, driven by an insatiable passion for multiplying prayers, to actual mechanical contrivances for working off the greatest number of them in the shortest time by movements of the lips, or strings of beads, or the many-colored prayer-cylinder (*kurdu*) stuffed with

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formulas on paper slips, or with the books of the law, and turned by hand! These are nature's own revendications, enforcements of rights suppressed or disallowed, in such ways as remain possible; proving at least that the balance of spiritual forces cannot be destroyed. In the very extravagance of such self-contradictions and perversions there is a blind pressure of the instincts towards immeasurableness, which affirms man's innate relation to the infinite.

Veneration of relics and images.

Swarms of images standing above millions of prostrate men, or heaps of bones, ashes, jewels, vases, coins, devoutly laid up in *topes*, those bubble-shapes that deny the validity of what they hold, are but illustrations of the spectacle that every distinctive religion has presented in degenerating from its first inspiration. Neither Buddhism nor Catholicism, however, must be supposed to teach mere idolatry of dead objects. Pure fetichism belongs only to the lowest stages of the religious sentiment; and every historical faith carries with it traditional idealism enough to forbid recurrence to the mere dread of volitions inherent in the dead wood and stone. The worship rendered these images and relics looks through them to their consecration by some superior presence, some subtle guardianship, some association that holds them to what was once a personal relation. It differs far less than is wont to be supposed from sentiments familiar to all civilized people. The extreme demonstrativeness in these rituals, which seems to indicate no less than real adoration of the statues and relics themselves, is in fact habitual to the Oriental mind, and does not by any means imply that the merely symbolic meaning of the object is lost in sheer idolatry. "The intelligent Burman," says Malcom, "claims that

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he regards images as papists do a crucifix: he places no trust in them, but uses them to remind him of Gotama, and in compliance with his commands."[1]

Its limitation in Buddhist art.

Buddhism, in fact, subjects this form of service to special restraints. Its devotion was centered in love and gratitude to a man. Its oldest temples are without visible objects, even of this form of piety.[2] But an old legend describes the Buddha as directing his picture, inscribed with the precepts of the law, to be sent by one king to another, as the best of gifts, and as a means of conversion, causing his shadow to be cast on a surface for the purpose.[3] The earliest images to which the tributes of this faith in human forces were naturally directed were in human form: far from such monstrous combinations as Hinduism has allowed its later sects, they were confined to the Buddha preaching, meditating, resting; to the figures of his saints, and to human representations of his church and his law. The Sutras abound in praises of his personal beauties; reckoning them by hundreds, defining and classifying them; covering his *ideal* image with every conceivable symbol of supernatural strength and grace and sweetness;[4] yet a wonderful soberness, suggestive of heartfelt respect for the human and the real, reigns throughout the world of actual Buddhist statuary. The earnestness of that profound sense of the limits of outward perception and possession, of that call to an unseen path of release and rest, which gave meaning to the teacher's life and word, would seem to have made these colossal forms,[5] lifted above the gath-

[1] *Notes on the Burman Empire*, ch. vi.
[2] See *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. viii. p. 42.
[3] Burnouf, p. 340–344.
[4] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 367.
[5] Great numbers of these statues, in all Buddhist countries, are from twenty to forty feet high, and many are far larger: they will ordinarily measure from twelve to twenty. Koeppen, I. 509.

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ered relics of the mortal part, its enduring home. Contrast this absence of pretension and display, this calm reliance on the bare truth of inward thought and purpose, these quiet gestures of teaching, these folded hands of meditation, with the boundless license of symbolic expression in the popular statues of Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Siva. The lifted finger commends to silence; the half-closed eyes recall to self-discipline and self-restraint; the sitting posture, a restfulness not of death nor sleep, but of life, affirms the still patience of law that abides in the depths of all existence; the benign aspect pervades them with human love.[1] This limitation has its *moral* value; holds religious feeling and fancy to a certain realistic interest. Art in Buddhist countries, especially in Japan, shows rare fidelity to nature, and surprising sense of all vital energies; and its tender patience in elaboration is referable in part, one cannot help thinking, to the influence of a religious sentiment which constantly insists on corresponding moral qualities and disciplines.[2]

Meaning of relic worship.

Veneration of relics is here combined, as in Catholic Christianity, with prayers for the dead, intercession of saints, and other related forms of devotion to personal ties. It is, in reality, to be explained as the natural cling of private affections, unenlightened by science, to the senses; as their protest against being severed by death from the outward objects with which they have been associated. Escape from supernaturalism does not destroy this interest, but simply frees it from extravagance: it is changed from a superstition to a sentiment, and its

[1] The Buddhist sculptor is required to give the Teacher such a countenance as becomes the "Father of all creatures." Koeppen, p. 505. The elaborate symbolism of later figures indicates Sivaite influences. Schlagintweit shows that the figures of Buddha and his saints, in Thibet, are of high Aryan type.

[2] On the realism of Japanese art, see Jarves's *Art Thoughts*, ch. ix.

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object from a miracle to a memento. This result is simply due to the fact that science renders the required justice to the senses *from the side of reason*, releasing the emotional nature from that anxious watch over their interests which it could not otherwise abandon. I do not wonder, therefore, at the dimensions attained by relic-worship, under the influence of a religion like Buddhism, which theoretically rejects the claims of the senses, at the same time giving a prominent place to the distinctively human and personal; in other words, to sensibilities and affections which inevitably adhere to these claims. It is the struggle of the sentiments to hold their own; their cling to associations threatened with destruction by the sense of the transiency and unreality of phenomena.

I do not think we need carry this thought so far as to suppose with Burnouf, that the intense attachment of the Buddhists to the relics of their saints grew out of the feeling that these dead bones were all that remained of the beings they had loved; thus making it an argument to prove that *nirvâna* was annihilation. Would not belief in such a *nirvâna* have *abolished* interest in these mere mementos of decay, in place of stimulating it? That, on the other hand, relics were piously gathered up, to the last fragment, and abundantly supplied by the imagination where they were wanting, would seem to demonstrate that those whom they represented were still cherished as individuals whose life was bound up with the hopes and desires of their followers. It would thus come in evidence *against* Burnouf's theory, rather than for it. It is also to be noted that the relics of *kings*, who certainly could not have been thought to have passed into *nirvâna*, were honored in the same way. The con-

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servation of relics was not wholly unknown to Brahmanism; but it became from the first the special characteristic of Buddhism, measuring the intensity of its sense of change, decay, and death, as a sorrowful destiny, to be in every way, symbolically and spiritually, mastered and set aside.

So the dead body of the loved Buddha, who had passed into *nirvâna*, was idealized beyond measure: the fears and hopes of millions gave enormous proportions to the mythopoetic faculty in this direction, and scattered his members, like those of Egyptian Osiris, over the world.[1] Every organ, feature, atom of his body, alive or dead, is sacred. He throws up his beautiful locks and his royal garments into the air when abandoning the world; and they are caught devoutly as they ascend, by a Brahma, and borne away to a grand relic shrine in the Brahmâ heavens where all the angels can adore them.[2] He distributes every thing he can detach from his person to his disciples during his life. At his death, whatever has passed through the funeral fires is divided into eight portions, to satisfy as many contending nations; then follow the miraculous restorations and multiplications which assure his presence wherever his name is praised. His skull is in India; his shoulder-blade, in Ceylon; the apples of his eyes are in a cloister in Nagara; his hairs, nails, fingers, in various cities of the East; his very shadow is shown in several caves of Western China; and his foot-prints are visited by crowds of pilgrims on the highest peaks of Asia accessible to devotion. His water-jar is laid up to work miracles at the Singhalese capital; his wash-bowl, staff, and mantle are scattered in mani-

Its extent in Buddhism.

[1] St. Hilaire, 294.

[2] *Wheel of the Law*, p. 103.

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fold shapes over vast empires. His left eye-tooth in early times converted an army. A Brahman king tried to destroy it; burnt, beat, buried, stamped it out under the feet of elephants; but in vain. It *would* reappear, on some lotus-leaf, no mere perishable eye-tooth, but an indestructible element of the ascended Buddha. Finally, wearied and overpowered, the imperial enemy gave in and built it a splendid temple, where it wrought indescribable miracles. Bloody wars were fought for that eye-tooth of the Buddha. In the fifth century, Fahian, the Chinese pilgrim, saw it carried about in pomp; long lines of elephants were taught to kneel when it passed by, and flowers were strewn by the people along the ways. At last it fell to the British, who tried to destroy it, but failed like the rest; and so it is still honored with magnificent ceremonies, in *Mahâ-Nuwara*, or the Great City, in Ceylon,[1] where it was displayed, in 1858, amidst prostrate crowds, to Burmese priests sent to compare it with a rival tooth preserved at Ava.[2]

All this has its analogies in Christian history. And though a mystery rested on the disposal of the actual body of Jesus, which protected it from this kind of mythology, till veneration for his person had changed it, in popular faith, into the very substance of deity, yet the worship of relics has approached as nearly as possible to the same point, in the wonder-working of his sepulchre, his manger, and his cross; even of his foot-prints on the Mount of Olives, in the houses of Jerusalem, and in various Catholic Churches of France.[3] At the close of the fourteenth century,

[1] See the account of the deposition of Gotama's relics in the great dagop of Ruanvelli, by Dushtagâmini, and of the accompanying miracles, in the thirty-first chapter of the *Mahâvansa*.

[2] St. Hilaire, p. 417.

[3] Maury, *Légendes Pieuses*, p. 214.

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the Abbey of St. Denis presented a piece of the head of St. Hilary to the city of Poitiers: the chin had already been obtained. St. Andrew's head was worshipped for centuries at Patros. "Kings died for the purchase of it. It was carried in procession to Rome. The heads of Peter and Paul would have been borne forth to meet it, but the gold and iron which enshrined them were too heavy. At the Milvian Bridge, the Pope made an eloquent address to the Head, entreating its aid in overcoming the Turks. It was conveyed in splendor to St. Peter's, and deposited under the high altar."[1] No Vigilantius has arisen in the East to rebuke the "rag and dust worship" of Buddhist Jeromes; no Luther to thunder against the venders of sacred images that swarm in all Buddhist states. But even the freer and more practical understanding of the European races did not save them from an almost Oriental mania for this kind of traffic and this form of devotion; and in the ninth century the sale of relics had become the main part of the trade of Rome.

The topes.

It is probable that far more of conscious imposture has mingled with these operations of the Catholic Church than with those of Buddhism in the same direction. It is a desire for the preservation, rather than for the sale, of relics, that has covered southern Asia with *topes*, or *dagops*,[2] from Samarkand and Cabul to the extremities of China and further India. The oldest topes are in the form of a bubble, surmounted by an umbrella, symbolical of sovereignty. In later times several figures of the latter kind were placed one above another, in a series typical of the several stages of the religious life, or of the triple

[1] Milman's *Latin Christianity*, VIII. 221.

[2] Topes, or *stupas* (heaps) are *tumuli*: *dagobas* are relic-shrines. The one term is Pâli, the other Singhalese; but their meaning is substantially the same.

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form under which the religious ideal was conceived, as person, as law, as church. In this way the Chinese pagoda grew up out of the Indian *dagop* or *stupa*, which contains its elements, but whose emblematic bubble is not adapted to the realistic taste of the Chinese. Between these styles is the pyramidal, which is less common. The *dagops* are in grottoes or in the open air, near the *vihâras*, or places of assembly and temporary sojourn; and these last also, although built for convenience in the form of a parallelogram or square, exhibit the bubble-shape in the most sacred portion, the apse. Under these singular monuments, significant at once of utter weakness and sovereign power, of the transient and the eternal, the relics were buried in cells, with the prayer that they might remain for ever closed; probably in the hope that they might be undisturbed till the coming of the next Buddha, thousands of years in the future.[1]

Significance of Buddhist mythology.

The mythology of Buddhism presents the same boundless yearning for the infinite and eternal amidst the fleeting of phenomenal forms. Mythology is always prophetic: it is the child's play of intuition and imagination, and dimly divines those essential relations of man and nature, which science afterwards reaches slowly and presents clearly in detail; so that, as we look backward, man seems to have been predicting them all through the ages. Even in this, the most extravagant imagery of religious faith that ever grew, such instinctive presentiment of the latest facts and the broadest laws is too plain to be mistaken. This revel of the imagination in pathless and endless wastes of number was astronomy and microscopy in ideal dream. "The

[1] On Buddhist relics, statuary, &c., see Bastian's *Siam*, pp. 119–163.

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world," it said, "rests on a lotus-leaf, which carries also innumerable worlds beside it. So with every other leaf of the flower. Out of the atmospheric deep in which this lotus floats, arise so many similar flowers, that it requires unity followed by four millions of ciphers to designate their number. And every leaf of every one of these flowers bears as many worlds as the first. But this one atmosphere is but an atom to the whole. There are as many more as there are flowers in this, and each is as full of worlds." When science would refute the theological fictions of a beginning of time, and of a creation a few thousand years ago, it points to the ancient geological layers, counting these backwards till the definite sense of numbers is lost. The Buddhist imagination, not obliged, like science, to fill out its spaces with historical facts and conditions, goes further; it strikes away the notion of a beginning, at one sweep, and marks immeasurableness as inherent in time itself. It recalls, as if it were no earlier than yesterday, an event declared to have occurred ten quadrillion times a hundred quadrillions of kalpas ago, each kalpa being thirteen hundred and forty-four millions of years! So of the prolific power of *virtue* in every atom of its own substance. "Buddha caused a beam of light to go forth out of every one of the eighty thousand pores of his body, and on the top of each beam was a flower, in which sat a Buddha teaching his disciples." "Four things are immeasurable: space; the number of worlds therein; the number of sentient creatures; and the wisdom of the Holy One."

Its pure morality.

The miracles of Buddha are colossal, penetrate all worlds, supplant all physical laws and powers; yet they never violate the eternal laws of

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morality, but in all possible forms affirm their authority and all-sufficiency. The freedom which love and wisdom claim in the universe, their power to make the little great, the distant near, the atom reveal infinity, shines through all this delirium of fable; a deeper sanity that binds it to the heart and conscience of more sober races, and to forms of imagination more ripe and calm with the experience of natural law.

Its universality.

It is all concentrated in Gotama Buddha; but its very fertility and plasticity save it from crystallizing definitely and exclusively, as a closed series of prodigies, around this earlier human divinity, as Protestant supernaturalism centered and confined the miracle in its Christ. The love and wisdom of Gotama are one and the same thing with love and wisdom in all *arhats* and *bodhisattvas;* in all the saints who walk in the great "Way of Release;" one and the same thing for all, in its power over the elements, and in the gift of transforming itself into all forms and forces for the good of man. It is through the *merit of all beings* in these higher stages of attainment that the "worlds are renewed;" as it is through the vice of all degraded beings that they are destroyed. The heavens and hells of Buddhism, with their tremendous imagery, go behind all Buddhas; for they rest on the essential nature of virtue and vice.

The miraculous legends of Gotama's birth and infancy indeed, like corresponding forms of the myth in relation to other Eastern saviours, isolate him in celestial splendor above all beings; yet only as celebrating, in this as in other religions, the divine right of holiness and love, and the loyalty of the visible universe to their redeeming power. Thus at his birth ten thousand worlds are moved. He takes seven steps, as a

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sign that he would have the seven constituents of the highest knowledge; and Brahmâ holds over his head the white parasol of kingly power, to show that he would arrive at the perfection of all saintly fruits of emancipation.[1] The older gods — *magi*, bringing their tribute to the child who shall supplant them — lay the powers of a rejoicing universe at his feet. We have already noticed the similarity of these legends to those of the birth and infancy of Jesus. We have only to allow for the difference between the redundance of Oriental fancy and the sobriety of Hebrew and Greek, and the points of resemblance certainly appear remarkable: the royal genealogy of Gotama; the supernatural conception without sexual passion; the salutation of the mother by guardian *devas;* the worship of the new-born babe by all the powers and elements of nature. In this moment of rapture at the birth of nature's lord was concentrated by Buddhism all that Christian mythology scattered more slowly along the life of Jesus, and infinitely more to a similar purpose. The material body of the holy mother became transparent, and disclosed him, fair as a flower, leaning on his hands within it. At his birth prisoners were released, the fires of hell put out, the living creatures forgot their hates, and sea and land were strewn with flowers To explain these messianic correspondences, we need only remember that the religious imagination in both cases had to deal with the same faith in the authority of holiness and love, the same wonderful and prophetic fact of their entrance into humanity, and the same ignorance of natural laws.

Whence its extent.

Oriental worship of miracle *has remained colossal* in comparison with Christian mythology, because it is a more profoundly real sentiment;

[1] *Wheel of the Law*, p. 103.

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not weakened by that sense of divided allegiance to which the latter is subjected by the increasing perception of positive law. Its mythology does not intimate a divine interference with the universe by reason of evil, nor convey any implication against nature, either as of break in its order, or of supplement to its imperfection; but is co-extensive and even identical with nature. It is not evidence of dogma nor compulsion to belief, so much as spontaneous faith in the power of mind to change the appearances of things, the ideality of wonder and delight. "Miracles," says Gobineau, "being regarded in the East simply as ever-possible manifestation of power acquired by men over the changeable methods of nature, are not regarded as proving any thing in behalf of the religious belief of the performer."[1] So that nature may well be a free playground for the gigantic transformations of mythology.

Aśoka cuts a slip from the Buddha's holy Tree, surrounded by a thousand kings. With golden pencil he draws a vermilion stripe around a bough, and it separates from the tree by the virtue of prayer and the predestination of Buddha's law. Planted in a golden vessel, it instantly takes root, at which miracle all gods, men, and beasts, and the very earth itself, utter a shout of praise. Then proceeds the sacred bough, emitting many-colored rays, under convoy of persons of every caste, to Ceylon, on a ship, safely guided by the divine powers of a chief priestess, entrusted with this charge. Placed on the sacred earth prepared for it, the tree ascends into the sky, sending rays to the highest heavens of the gods, and there stands till sunset, converting ten thousand souls at a time.[2] Other relics ascend in the same way to shine

[1] *Relig. de l'Asie Centrale*, p. 298. [2] Turnour's *Mahâvansa*, ch. xviii.-xix.

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like the sun for a while; after which the earth heaves itself up to receive them with tumultuous joy. When the great temple of Ruanwelli is to be dedicated, the relics of Buddha are adored amidst celestial flowers and perfumes by gods and men, with music that fills the sky; they ascend into the atmosphere and are transformed into the natural shape of the Buddha, whose multitudinous qualities form themselves around him in a nimbus of glory, the mere sight of which converts innumerable beings into saints.[1] Palaces in the heavens are described as seen by the eyes of saints, of dimensions and splendors that strangely contrast with that service of dead bones by which they are attained. Yet what associates such relics with the joys of paradise is hinted in the tale of Bhirani, a slave girl, who for her *benevolence to the poor* was born again in a heaven of delight, the queen of one of these divine mansions, described as forty-eight leagues in circumference.[2]

Shall we wonder more at such idealization of the relics of mortality, or at such absolute faith in the supremacy of love? In either way, this infantile imagination plays with nature as a child with the blocks which he builds into structures that grow colossal in his dream.

The fall into ecclesiasticism.

But the mythology of Buddhism, like its worship of images and relics, grew up under other influences besides its original motive. Like Brahmanism it fell from its stage of prophecy to its stage of priesthood, from inspiration to ritualism; and what was at first the spontaneous play of earnest instincts, however blind, crystallized into the polity of

[1] Turnour's *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxi.

[2] Ibid., ch. xxvii.

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a church. In tracing the process, we detect in its insidious steps the perils of ecclesiastical organization, and the necessity for constant reconstruction of religion from free inward centres of personal life.

Steps of the process.

Gotama, so far as is known, instituted no cultus. His main work must have been itinerant preaching of his practical ethics and his philosophy of life to whomsoever he found prepared to hear; and this novel function in India must have freely chosen such methods as occasions prompted or allowed. Special religious rites were a small matter to one who so strongly emphasized every moral duty. So far as they entered into his public ministry at all, they must have borrowed the prevailing terms and symbols of Brahmanism; and how much ritualism he was likely to have taken from these may be inferred from the sentence ascribed to him from earliest times: "Brahmâ dwells in the *homes* where children honor their parents."[1] The offerings of flowers and perfumes, the sound of music and the utterance of devout ejaculations, which have always been main features of the Buddhist service, are precisely such forms as might have grown up spontaneously in those earliest popular gatherings around the beloved teachers of a gospel like this. Yet with the increase of his disciples, and the growth of a definite purpose in their minds, Gotama may have established some kind of arrangement among them, which developed itself into later distinctions of a more positive character. We find his assembly consisting of *bhixus* (mendicants), called also *śramanas* (ascetics), all of whom, men or women, are received on equal terms.[2] Yet it is said that "some comprehended more

[1] Burnouf, p. 338.

[2] Ibid., p. 278. From *śraman* (diligent) is derived the Chinese "*shamun*" or priest.

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of the doctrine, others less, though all were absorbed alike in the Buddha and his law."[1] Here was already ground for distinctions. His furthest step in that direction seems to have been classification of his followers according to age and worth.[2] We find *sthaviras*, or elders, distinguished by these qualifications, teaching in the earliest schools and presiding at the assemblies.[3] From the whole body of *śrâvakas*, or hearers, there soon comes to be set off an elect class, called *arhats;* but this was also a distinction founded on wisdom and its supposed power over nature, —the word itself signifying *merit*.[4] The earliest schism, however, resulting in the exodus of a body of *sthaviras* and the conversion of Kashmir to the faith, is believed to have originated in the rebellion of the younger disciples against the growing authority of these "elders."[5] Veneration for "the master" was another path towards ecclesiasticism. It was natural to gather up his relics, to divide them as a common legacy among as many as possible; to multiply them for the same purpose; to proselyte with images and pictures; to add the relics of early apostles of the faith to his; to locate them in shrines; and to develop out of all this a prescribed system of pilgrimages and a mass of mythical traditions. It was natural that converts should divide into monks and laity;[6] that they should gather into small fraternities, choose abbots or spiritual fathers, and classify men according to their progress in the faith, as "the unsanctified" and "the holy;"[7] that they should meet yearly in larger conclave, and

[1] Burnouf, p. 290. [2] Lassen, II. 456; Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 265. [3] Koeppen, I. 383.

[4] Burnouf, p. 297. The *Mahâvanśa* (ch. iii.) speaks of the first council held immediately after Gotama's death, as an assembly of *arhats;* but its whole account is manifestly legendary.

[5] See *Journ. Asiatique*, for 1870, p. 465. [6] Bhixus and Upâsakas.

[7] Prithagdjanas and Aryas.

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hold periodical "assemblies of liberation," to discuss questions of policy in the conduct of this great missionary movement, and to gather up contributions for the same; an aim that proved so successful as in after times to give the institution the title of "the Field of Alms." It was natural that monasteries and nunneries should multiply, and prove stiff defenders of orthodoxy; and legislative synods try to make ecclesiasticism complete. Three of these were held within two hundred and fifty years after Buddha's death, to define errors in discipline, custom, and faith, and affirm the true Buddhist Law. In the absence of written documents relative to the original faith, *heresies* could not be wanting. In less than two centuries, seventeen different sects had appeared.[1] There were schools of strict and schools of lax discipline; schools holding to the oldest Sutras only, and schools accepting also the later metaphysics;[2] schools of speculation, and schools resting on faith alone.[3] Quite as inevitable it was that there should come a Grand Council, somewhat of the Nicene Christian type, to settle finally what was orthodox, who were to be encouraged, and who to be held heretical, though not, as in Western dogmatic differences, to be suppressed by force. Buddhism was the Protestantism of India, and a multiplication of heresies followed its larger liberty; but not less distinctly did all profess to hold the original faith, and appeal to the name of the Buddha. These were natural tendencies to consolidation: doubtless they were strengthened by a common opposition on the part of all Buddhist sects to Brahmanism. Of the synods, to which all the traditions testify, the

[1] Turnour's *Mahâvansa*, xx.

[2] Koeppen, I. 157, 158.

[3] Sâutrântikas and Vaibhâshikas.

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natural result must have been some kind of hierarchy. That it did not develop into a great Hindu Church is one of the most wonderful things in the history of this wonderful movement. Outside of India, wherever a state embraced Buddhism, a patriarch established himself at the court.[1] The argument of convenience and expedition in the machinery of missionary work must have combined with personal ambition, to produce elements of official despotism out of grades of authority, that had begun in the natural gravitation of respect to age, worth, eloquence, and devotion.[2] All this was of course contrary to the democratic spirit of the early faith, to its philosophy and its morality; and the history of Buddhism in India shows how powerfully those elements of freedom could work in counteraction of the ecclesiastical process.

Resistance to consolidation.

During the thousand years of Buddhist ascendency in India, that process was never developed. In the time of Hiouen Thsang, the early democracy of the faith was still vigorous. Thirteen centuries had elapsed since the first preaching of this word, and yet there was scarcely a sign of consolidation; there was no national church, no hierarchy, no ecclesiastical centre or headship.[3] The only unity was spiritual, the only authority was unseen. Every *vihâra* was a free centre of religion, like those free *political* units, the "village communities." And, with all this independent local life, the peninsula shone with flourishing Buddhist institutions of culture and humanity. Could ecclesiasticism have come and gone again? We can hardly believe it. We read the record with

[1] Rémusat, *Mélanges Posthumes.* [2] Koeppen, I. 382.
[3] St. Hilaire, p. 298.

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admiration, and ask ourselves if the history of any religion affords its parallel.

The ecclesiasticism of Thibet.

But in Thibet the process of organization was furthered by a traditional respect for patriarchal institutions.[1] It was therefore inevitable that a succession of infallible pontiffs should at last be set up in proof of the antiquity and dignity of the faith. Further combinations with the old beliefs in transmigration and incarnation issued in the Dalai-Lama of this eastern papacy, and his equal, if not superior, the Bogdo of southern Thibet: ever renewed and propagated by miraculous tokens and special inspirations of his college of priests, a hierarchy of no less than nine distinct orders.[2] The parallel with Christian history may be pursued further:—to the rivalries of different Buddhist popes; to their political intrigues for building up a vast temporal power; to the contentions of Red and Yellow Lamas; and to the ambition of every important convent to possess an authoritative Lama (*Chubilghan*) of its own.[3] We may add to this series of analogues with Western Catholicism the fall of the Lamaist Church under the dominion of a foreign power, namely, the Chinese Imperial Master who now "protects" Lha Ssa, that Oriental Rome; and the idle dream of its present pontiff that supernatural aid is at hand to subject civilization to his sway.[4]

The issues of ecclesiasticism.

Thus Buddhist organization in Thibet ends, like Brahmanical caste in India, in *disintegrative* forces. They are found, after all the phases of consolidation, all-powerful in this as in

[1] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 619.

[2] Ibid., p. 572.

[3] *Journ. Asiat. Soc.*, XVI. 254.

[4] See the interesting account of Modern Lamaism in Koeppen, II. 105–242. Also Bastian, *Reisen in China*, pp. 571–580, and Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*.

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other distinctive communions, showing how vain is that assumption of finality which is always made by Institutional Religion.

The steps of degeneracy involved in this process were the same which every effort to organize a religious faith on a great scale and in permanent form has inevitably pursued. The first simple precepts of the teacher multiplied into a mass of ritualism and petty discipline, filling fifteen volumes of the enormous Thibetan canon, which amounts in all to three hundred and sixty books.[1] This scripture, outside Thibet, is no longer read to the nations in their own tongues.[2] The representatives of the non-resistant Śâkyamuni now inflict cruel punishments on their subjects.[3] The perfect democracy of the earlier time was slowly yet steadily modified, till slaves could not be admitted to the Church without consent of their masters; and the doors were fast closed to a diseased person, or one of uncertain origin, or one who had slain a priest, or made trouble in the priesthood.[4] Recruited in perpetuity, by the custom that one lama shall come out of every family which has more than one son, the priesthood at last directs the whole private life of the people, officiating on all domestic occasions, performing the part of physicians, astrologers, conjurers, intercessors for the dead. And the profligacy which is inherent in the unnatural relations of monasticism is not wanting, though prevented in great measure by the ease with which, under Buddhist rules,[5] a discontented monk or nun can return into the world. The simplicity of the early faith is moreover corrupted by intermixture with the popular polytheism, whose dei-

[1] Bastian, p. 575. [2] Koeppen, II. 288. [3] Ibid., p. 331.
[4] Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 210. [5] Koeppen, I. 584, 354.

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ties have been referred to spheres below the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, yet receive a modified form of worship. Buddhism has, however, its rationalistic development also, as in China; where the hierarchical system has never been developed, and the theoretic elements it depended on, such as incarnation and transmigration, have never taken root. Although China as a political master is believed to dictate the succession to the Dalai Lamaship and to control the priesthood of Thibet, the actual relations of the people of the "Middle Kingdom" with this spiritual centre are in fact very remote. As a natural result, many of the oppressive rules and personal vices of the mendicant and monkish class just mentioned are, in China, to a considerable extent, escaped. The mendicancy of the Buddhist priesthood, of course a mark of dependence, will greatly tend to their downfall in the present age: they however, especially in Ceylon, compare favorably in morals with the clergy of other religions, notwithstanding the peculiar perils to which their celibacy and their mendicancy alike expose them.[1]

Buddhist and Christian analogies.

The old and constant record of distinctive religions is their passage from Inspiration to Ritualism and thence to Ecclesiastical Despotism. Yet the resemblance of Thibetan Buddhism to Roman Catholicism has often been supposed to prove a direct influence of the latter, on the former, of these religions. There is no more need of such an explanation than there is evidence of its truth. Such evidence is wholly wanting. The cross, the mitre, the rosary, censers, bells at the altar, tonsure, exorcism, celibacy, fasts, holy water, baptism, confession, benediction by laying on of hands, are thoroughly Oriental symbols, indigenous to the soil. So the custom of going on pilgrim-

1 St. Hilaire, p. 403.

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ages is much older than Christianity. In the third century India was and had long been the resort of Buddhist pilgrims from all northern Asia. The idea of prayer to saints, as well as that of compelling their aid, is familiar to Hindu faith from earliest times. Confession in the Buddhist Church is very well described as growing out of the maxim, "Live hiding your good works, and proclaiming your evil ones;" which is certainly in the true spirit of the sutras. Confession is spoken of as a custom in the oldest legends of Buddhism, and even represented as made before the whole assembly, at certain seasons, and under the direction of Buddha himself.

That mediæval Christianity originated these and other forms of Thibetan Lamaism, through the teaching of Nestorian monks, is asserted upon no other evidence than conjecture.[1] It is much less improbable that the facts are the other way, — that Christian symbolism is very largely of Oriental origin.[2] Buddhism is, as our whole account has shown, genuinely Indian.[3] It made its way into Western Asia some time previous to the Christian era. Its influence in moulding Gnostic, Manichæan, and Neo-Platonic teachers is unquestionable.[4]

We may observe also, in passing, that the resemblances between Gnostic systems on the one

[1] Tennent gives many legends from the *Mahâvansa* strikingly resembling those of the Old and New Testaments, which he ascribes to the influence of Malabar Jews and Nestorian Christians. But why may not this resemblance have grown out of that common movement of the religious sentiment in man, which must explain the analogies of Thibetan Buddhism with Romanism in dogma and ritual? On the other hand, Ferguson (*Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 499) thinks that nine-tenths the changes introduced into Christianity in the Middle Ages were of Buddhist origin! It is very easy to go much too far in the direction of historic derivation.

[2] Lassen; Prinsep; Koeppen; Thomson's *Introd. to Bhag. Gitâ.*

[3] Burnouf; Colebrooke; St. Hilaire.

[4] Lassen, III. 354–405, 440. Baur's *Christliche Gnosis* (1835), pp. 54–60.

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hand, and the Buddhist and Sânkhya on the other, are of a very profound character. Among these are their common opposition to the material and changing world; their successive potencies emanating in descending series; the idea of creation as originating in the fall of a beam from the world of light; the recognition of justice as ruling the processes of existence; the threefold division of qualities; the faith in liberation through knowledge; and the separation of the soul from 'nature' into its own self-subsistence. Then the very point of contact for the Oriental with the Greek mind was provided in the great trade-emporium of Alexandria, where Gnosticism arose contemporaneously with the recorded embassies of the Hindus, commercial and other, to the West.[1] It is matter of history also that Buddhism was well known in Babylon, just before the appearance of Mani and his dualistic faith;[2] and that the Neo-Platonists sought very earnestly and successfully to acquaint themselves with Oriental systems.[3]

Influence on Christian systems.

The whole process of reasoning from moral and spiritual resemblances in different religions, to a historical connection between them, is, however, to be handled with great caution. When used, as it so frequently is, in the interest of a special faith, it has been very apt to turn its sharpest edge against the user. But why should it be ignored, in *religious* history alone, that like causes must breed like effects? The similarity may well run into minute details even, since the great shaping moulds of human nature and religious relation are alike in all races.

Thus, in the East and in the West, ecclesiastical

[1] Strabo, Pliny, and others, quoted in Lassen, III. 57–73.
[2] Lassen, III. p. 407.
[3] Matter's *École d'Alexandrie*, II. 368.

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Christianity and Buddhism.

organization naturally enough presents the same essential features and processes of degeneracy. Comparative religion shows us a similar picture in the history of Christianity to that which we have been studying.

Jesus apparently organized no religious machinery, no positive cultus. On the contrary, he preached and worked in a personal, prophetic way; announcing an approaching end of this world and the coming of a kingdom that was not of it; and calling on men to accept his claim as Messiah to judge between the just and the unjust, in that day. Of the institutional meaning of the approaching change, and of the special ways in which his own name would be exalted therein, his record gives no sign that he had the least presentiment. How could he or his immediate disciples anticipate its grand hierarchy, ecclesiastical councils, machinery of association for the coercion of private judgment? It lay *involved*, indeed, in his original claim of authority vested in one exclusive Lord and Master of salvation, just as Buddhistic ecclesiasticism, in *its* peculiar form, grew out of the concentration of Buddhism around one personal name. If there be but one church and One Head thereof, it naturally follows that there should always be a representative of this Head, visible as the church itself. On this there further follows an all-controlling mechanism to perpetuate the idea. But at first Christianity knew simply the congregation, choosing its own teachers, and managing its own concerns; under apostolic advice, it is true, and perhaps, to a certain extent, dictation. A few simple forms; some slight conditions of membership, deemed necessary in days of weakness and peril from false brethren; the Jew-Christians indeed insisting on circumcision;

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yet unable to impose it on the Gentile world; friendly or admonitory letters passing from church to church, with contributions from the strong in aid of the weak; — this was all the machinery in its age of inspiration by the original motive. But contentions began early, over what Jesus was and what he willed. Churches multiplied. Bishops meddled with each other's flocks. Councils were necessary to settle the faith, and, after quarrelling their utmost, imposed their decisions on the people. Metropolitans managed or browbeat the country pastors, settling and unsettling ministers, lobbying and levying, *pre*scribing and *pro*scribing. Gradually the political prestige of the Metropolitan of Rome made him Head of the Church visible, representative of the One Invisible Head. Strong men like Victor and Gregory sat in the imaginary Peter's-seat, mastered the councils and the state, fulminated decrees and settled points of ritual, till the Roman Catholic Church, with its strange mixture of mummery and devotion, of pomp and humility, became for its season a sovereign in the religious world. All the passions and follies, as well as the nobilities of thought and conduct, by which it was brought to its throne, were steps in the evolution of the idea of ecclesiastical organization, which had gathered around the conception of a Christ. The second stage of Christianity, the age of Priesthood and Ritualism, was to have its day. It compelled the third, which was fresh Inspiration. Luther, preceded by the mediæval mystics, came; and there was recurrence to the free personal life, the root of religion. But the recognition of this root was still imperfect, and again came organization about the name and the church of Christ. Calvin soon turns the prayer and the protest to rigid dogma and

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merciless discipline; and the Protestant sects build up new limbos, as like as may be, under the new conditions of civilization, to those they had spurned. Again therefore comes reaction to the inspiration of a new ideal; and the free personal religion that becomes the Free State is laying its foundations, not now in ecclesiastical construction around a historical name or person, but in the moral laws and natural forces, in unity of practical brotherhood, integrity of culture, and worship of the infinite in the whole movement of life and growth.

Why Buddhism is unprogressive.

Why has Buddhism lacked this vigor and stir of progress? Doubtless because, with all its reaction upon Hindu belief and institutions, it remained within the old Hindu circle, and made contemplation the chief end of man. Still the dreaming brain supplanted spiritual muscle and nerve. Still it so brooded over the idea, as to lose the form of *action*. "My religion," said Chinese Laotseu, in the true Buddhist spirit, "consists in thinking the inconceivable thought, in going the impassable way, in speaking the ineffable word, in doing the impossible thing." We may smile, but the old dreamer meant an ideal faith. As abstraction and meditation, all great thought works in this way. Yet in action it must conform to conditions; and in the mutual contact of these two is struck out the fire of progress.

The Hindu type in Buddhism.

How inveterate the cerebral element in the Hindu mind! Even in its protest against an isolated sainthood in the name of love and pity, it could forbid the perception of those social and physical laws which provide the affections their natural opportunity. Greek, Afghan, Mogul, British, Dutch, American, have thus far done little to counteract the

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gravitation of the native Hindus to reverie. Abstract thinking has held dominion in their works and ways. As it came off triumphant within India from the Buddhist reaction towards practical work, so it has been communicated, in some measure, through the expansion of Buddhism itself, to other races of a less speculative cast.

The practical side of Buddhism prompted, of course, to the use of natural symbolism. But the symbols were chosen by the same absorbing sense of the transient and unreal in all positive forms. The *Lotus*, hovering on the heave of the sea, a delicate bloom just mantling for a moment a restless, all-engulfing deep; the *Wheel*, that symbol of a life that revolves for ever around itself, in perpetual change without progress, — these are the two select types of Buddhist thought and art. The wheel stands whirling before the door, to greet the stranger with its admonition. It whirls on the house-tops, a sign that even the routines of domestic life are a swift motion that escapes us while we seek to grasp and to hold it fast. It whirls on the hearth by the draft of the fire; and it whirls in the running stream by force of water; and men carry it whirling as they walk. It whirls as vicarious religious machinery, adopted into the formalism of meritorious works; and, as with symbolism in general, other superstitions have doubtless very much obscured its primary meaning. For even so does man relieve himself from the vanity of for ever contemplating a restless whirl of vicissitude, where nothing abides but change itself.

The symbolism of dreams.

Yet what is this symbol, after all, but admonition to seek the eternal, and to trust in the law that rounds all change with preserving renewal and return? Nor can we doubt that such deeper

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meanings have given rest and courage to thousands of meditative watchers of the Buddhist Wheel.

The Wheel was in fact not only the accepted emblem of transmigration and its returns to birth, but also, as associated with the *Disk* (which indicates the strength of the arm that sets it rolling, perhaps also the orb of the sun), an emblem of universal dominion. It was the sacred mark seen on the hands and feet of the infant Buddha, by which the sages were able to predict his divine destiny to "roll the wheel" of unlimited sway.[1] Râma also is called "the Wheel." Thus the symbol of the transiency of all things becomes itself representative of the one only life that can overcome it; that is, of the almighty and everlasting. The very "prayer cylinder" represents the universe; and on its turning axle, bringing many sides successively to view, the types of all living creatures impartially revolve.[2] "A hundred and eight sacred figures are the guard of honor around the holy wheel." "The wheel has ignorance and desire for its axis, predisposition for its spokes, decrepitude and death for its tire."[3] To be master of their revolutions was to be a lord of life.

There was also a favorite *architectural* symbol for this worship of the duty that is rounded with a dream. That dome-like shape, — now sunk like a cushion for slumber, as on the Buddhist pillars; now swelling, as on the *stupas*, into a definite sphere; now active, now at rest; mobile in assuming either attitude, and longing, apparently, for both, — what an emblem it is of this mystical faith, so strangely combining practical

[1] See Sykes on the *Political State of Ancient India*. *Journal R. A. S.*, vol. vi.
[2] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 565.
[3] *Wheel of the Law*, pp. 113, 241.

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energy and contemplative calm! It is the *Bubble*, purest type of the transient and unreal; yet this mere evanescence, this very emptiness, this nothing, if it but breaks, — is in fact held from breaking, fixed in enduring forms of art and use.[1] Such the lesson that comes to us from *vihâra* and *dagop*, where the hearts of millions find impulse, and their longings and sorrows, rest.

The Banyan.

The Brahmanic symbol, on the other hand, was the *Banyan*, whose vast shadow expands and deepens with the multiplication of stems that shoot downward to refasten themselves in the earth. Hindu thought perpetually recurs to the inward shadows of that self-renewing mystery of change, which grows with the multiplication of visible forms and finite desires. Hew down these banyans of the mind, it says, and reach the eternal life they veil.

The East and the West.

Banyan and Bubble! Such the symbolism of a philosophy too deeply immersed in contemplation to find the full validity of the world and life. But we have seen that the forward look is not wanting; we have traced the disintegration of old social and religious systems, and the living germs of freedom in pantheistic belief; we have noted the force of Buddhist expansion, and its faith in a future that shall bring on earth the fulness of that peace and love which is the Buddhist heaven. The earnestness of this faith is illustrated by the abolition of slavery by the present king of Siam. The contact of the practical West with the introversive East must bring mutual impulse, and help to balance the human globe, as the continents the physical.

[1] It is even made emblematic, in the three hemispheres that constitute the *chaityas*, or relic-temples, of the triple form of deity, Buddha, the Law, and the Church.

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Bubble and Banyan mean more than dream. Is not that spheric form the emblem of a world-wide unity of life and purpose? That dim pillared forest is from a single root; and, as it grows, do not its airy branches turn back incessantly to the soil it loves, as if to hold earth and heaven united by imperishable ties? So with the faith which these natural symbols subserved. — The reaction of Brahmanism to Buddhism demonstrated that there were germs of democratic energy in the nature of contemplation itself. The Buddhist *pippala*, or *Bo-tree*, symbolizes the power of human nature to burst every bond of apathy. "Its vitality is extraordinary; its roots will crack and rend buildings, and only preserve their memory by the huge fragments which they retain for centuries clasped in their embrace." So the abstract idea fled into interior deeps only to find the need of social communion, to learn that man cannot live by meditation only, and to rend and burst its own ancient structures with the invincible energy of noble purpose. That mystical instinct of the Unity of Life, which formed the constant matrix of Hindu thought, — unconscious of its own inevitable relations, unaware that science should one day fulfil its substantial meaning in endless practical correlations and uses, — ruled life with an exclusiveness that depressed energy and threatened morality. Yet even then its very sense of a common bondage and misery in all living beings became a sympathetic impulse that reached throughout existence; an ardor of love and pity, that knew no limit, and no repose.

Practical and contemplative races.

The wide extension of Buddhism, as compared with Brahmanical aristocracy and caste, indicates that in Eastern civilization itself these oppres-

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sive elements are less natural to man than the instincts of fellowship and equality. Malcom tells us of a numerous and growing sect of reformers in Burmah, whose founder, Kolan, revised the Buddhist law, about seventy years ago, and taught the "worship of wisdom." "This sect discard the use of images, and have neither priests nor sacred books. Their teachers rise from time to time, always from among the laity, and gain many followers."[1] St. Hilaire describes a powerful reaction in Ceylon, from later superstitions to the simplicity of early Buddhism; a democratic revolution arising from the effort of the state, nearly a hundred years since, to confine the right of entrance to the priesthood within a single powerful caste. One of the lower castes, the Tchaliyas, had the spirit and intelligence to rebel against this innovation, and, being well provided with means, made an effective stand for puritan principles. About the end of the last century, these reformers imported from Burmah a body of priests, devoted, like themselves, to the simplicity of primitive Buddhism; and the movement received fresh impulse. Special changes insisted on by the reformers were these: — an open door into the ministry for all classes; freedom from state interference with religion; abandonment of astrology; reading of the books of the faith freely to all. This "sect of Amarapura," so called from the Burmese city whence it received its teachers, has been very successful in its efforts to purify Buddhism from polytheism and caste, and made numerous converts in different provinces of the kingdom. Other sects make other demands, and Ceylonese Buddhism seems to be alive with religious discussion and heretical zeal.[2] Another

[1] *Notes on Burmese Empire*, ch. vi. [2] St. Hilaire, p. 407.

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impressive illustration has recently appeared in Siam. Large numbers of Buddhists in that country have thrown aside negative speculation and ecclesiastical authority, and the whole miraculous element in their traditions. They have not been content with this individual emancipation, but have proceeded to found free churches on the moral teachings of Buddha, and the practical brotherhood which they require.[1] Surely these brave steps, apparently due to native impulses, — and, if furthered by contact with Christianity, yet showing no sign of conversion to that special faith, — point directly towards the free communion of Universal Religion.

[1] Weber's *Indische Studien*, II. 320; Koeppen, I. 468. The efforts of the late king in this direction, and the writings of his minister, (*The Modern Buddhist*) have already been noticed.

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